

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND LAW

'Game, set, match'

**AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY ON CONGRUENCE IN DISABILITY
SPORT SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIPS**

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**STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP AND
INDEPENDENT RESEARCH**

Except where reference is made in text, this report contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis or report presented by me for another degree or diploma.

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(Signed).....

Date: 14th October, 2011

Hannah Macdougall

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ABSTRACT

Congruence, fit, or match, (hereafter referred to as ‘congruence’) has been heavily examined within disciplines such as management and marketing when compared with the recent focus in a sponsorship setting. This is despite research suggesting congruence considerably influences the effectiveness of sponsorship communications and thereby the success of related corporate strategies and objectives. A literature review highlighted an opportunity to explore and extend current congruence research into management of disability sport sponsorships relationships by examining the construct across existing sponsorship management frameworks. The development of a conceptual framework was devised to aid understanding of concepts presented in the literature review as well as provided a link between two overarching research questions.

The exploratory nature of the research has resulted in the adoption of a case study methodology bound by sponsor perceptions of congruence in disability sport sponsorships. Semi-structured interviews were conducted across different types of disability sport sponsorship relationships and triangulated with document analysis and short ranking tools. Findings indicated sponsors placed a significant emphasis on congruence in sponsorship relationships. Confirmation of congruence as an overall, macro, and micro-dimensional concept was provided. Specific relevance of certain congruence dimensions across relationship types was combined with dimensions linking selection, strategy, objectives and implementation of sponsorships. The absence of formal measurement activities of both congruence and sponsorship relationships indicated unfulfilled potential of the marketing vehicle.

Research outcomes will aid disability sport sponsees in understanding the rationale for, as well as attracting and maintaining corporate support. Thereby, findings will contribute to the delivery of sporting opportunities for the growing number of people with a disability in Australia. Further, outcomes provide sponsors with tools to select efficiently and manage disability sport sponsees to obtain specific objectives. As such, this research has enabled an appreciation of sponsors’ management approaches to disability sport sponsorships and how congruence can be utilised to help engage, and leverage, both current and potential benefit exchange sources.

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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Term</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
Australian Bureau of Statistics	ABS
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	AIHW
Australian Paralympic Committee	APC
Australian Rules Football	AFL
Corporate Community Involvement	CCI
Corporate Social Responsibility	CSR
National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing	NASCAR
National Rugby League	NRL
People with a Disability	PWD
Plain Language Statement	PLS
Research Question One	RQ1
Research Question Two	RQ2

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

As the introductory chapter of the current thesis, an initial focus is placed upon establishing the context and background for the study. Opportunities existing in the literature are then identified in order to justify two overarching research questions. The chapter concludes by noting research contributions and outlining an overall structure thereby providing direction and guidance to the thesis.

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

After conceding the first set 6-7, Hall is now facing match point after winning the previous set 6-4. The stadium is filled to capacity and the crowd ready to erupt. Establishing a rhythm through multiple forehands and backhands, Hall appears to be handling the immense pressure placed on his shoulders given his number one ranking and home soil advantage. A dramatic final volley sees Hall claim victory over his American opponent, thus becoming “one of the greatest moments of [Hall’s] sporting life” (Hall, as cited in Wake, 2010, p. 1).

With a career that included 16 grand slam titles, six years as world number one, and an induction into the prestigious Sport Australia Hall of Fame (Wake, 2010), Hall saw tennis as having provided numerous opportunities. Tennis allowed Hall to travel the world and learn about himself, how to adapt to different situations, solve problems and overcome challenges. As such, the importance of sport in Hall’s life is evident. However, tennis provided Hall with an outlet where he could turn pent up negative energy into something positive. These negative emotions were a result of having both legs amputated at 16 and facing life confined to a wheelchair. However, wheelchair tennis has given Hall the chance to turn his life around and taken him on journeys he never thought possible (Heggarty, 2010).

Sport as a rehabilitation tool for people with a disability (PWD) is not unique to Hall’s case. Indeed, the Paralympics was founded to provide returned World War II veterans with motivation and coping strategies (Bailey, 2008; Pensgaard, Roberts, & Ursin, 1999). Moreover, sport can help PWD achieve independence (Bailey, 2008) while at the same time help to provide positive social, physical, and mental benefits (Woods, 2007). This is of critical importance given that PWD have lower participation rates in sport (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2011), generally have poorer health and are more likely to suffer ill health (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2010a). For example, the risk of chronic diseases, such

as diabetes, is four times higher for PWD (AIHW, 2010b). Also, PWD experience higher rates of obesity (69% vs. 58%) and have a staggering 48% rate of mental illness compared with only 6% of the general population (AIHW, 2010a). It is also important to note that the number of people with a disability or long-term health problem was 4.02 million in 2009 and that the Australian population is expected to rise from 22.61 to 30.9 - 42.5 million people by 2051 (ABS, 2008). As a result, the role of sport for people with a disability is one of critical importance given the benefits of physical activity but also as PWD are at a greater disadvantage than the general population (AIHW, 2010b)

Helping Australian PWD participate in sport are numerous nonprofit disability sporting organisations. These organisations come in a variety of forms and can be state or nationally based, represent athletes from a grassroots to elite level, and incorporate a whole range of disabilities across a variety of sports. The Australian Paralympic Committee (APC) represents the peak sporting body for athletes with a disability and is responsible for enabling athletes to participate in sport and compete at the Paralympic Games (APC, 2011).

These disability sporting organisations, associated sports, and athletes themselves, are gradually facing greater pressures of professionalisation and commercialisation (APC, 2010; Gómez, Martí, & Opazo, 2008). For example, wheelchair tennis is now conducted on a professional basis with its own tournament circuit, ranking system and prize money (Kewley, 2001). Given the internal focus of professionalisation, there has been an increased degree of organisational formalisation and employment of specialised staff (APC, 2011; Gómez *et al.*, 2008). Conversely, the operation of commercialisation in an environmental context has seen greater reliance on income from various stakeholders such as sponsors (APC, 2010). Adding to the complexity of professionalisation and commercialisation is the nonprofit environment these organisations are operating in. Becker-Olsen and Hill (2006) stated that the nonprofit environment is fast becoming increasingly competitive while also witnessing a global stagnation in government funding. Consequently, relationships with governments, national sporting organisations and corporate entities are crucial to the delivery sporting programs for PWD (Foster, 2011) as it is these relationships that provide vital support (e.g. income, services, or product).

Given that disability sporting organisations are currently involved in a host of relationships, each of which are pivotal in their own right, determining a focus on one

type of relationship was achieved in light of the following information. Sponsorship plays a significant role, both within a disability sport context and sport in general, as it is a billion dollar industry with 60-70% directed towards sport sponsorship (IEG, 2011). Herein lies the importance of sponsorship for disability sporting organisations and athletes, as well as highlighting the appropriateness of considering sponsorship relationships from a disability sport sponsorship relationship perspective. It is acknowledged that sport sponsorship myopia should not be the aim of a sporting organisation (Shilbury, Westerbeek, Quick, & Funk, 2009). However, there is a need to build, maintain, and understand the nature of these relationships (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Farrelly, Quester, & Burton, 2006). Understanding variant motivations and expectations of sponsorships can be achieved through the 'corporate community involvement' continuum (CCI; Austin, 2000). While the CCI continuum is discussed in-depth within chapter two, it is important to note how it created a lens to further investigate disability sport sponsorship relationships. Also pertinent to note is the interchangeable terminology found in previous literature when investigating sponsorships from a dyadic perspective. When referring to a 'sponsor', terminology has also included 'profit', or 'commercial', whereas the term 'sponsee' has also been expressed as 'nonprofit' or 'property' (Gwinner, 1997; Meenaghan, 1983; Olson & Thjømøe, 2011; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007; Zdravkovic, Magnusson, & Stanley, 2010). As such, this thesis has adopted a similar approach when discussing disability sport sponsorship relationships.

Literature has suggested that sponsorship is a key area of concern to management scholars as it plays a significant role in corporate strategies but is in need of further academic research (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Dolphin, 2003; Speed & Thompson, 2000). The importance of sponsorship can be found in that sponsorship can help achieve multiple marketing objectives at the same time (Thwaites, 1995), such as increasing sales (Easton & Mackie, 1998), enhancing corporate image (Javalgi, Traylor, Gross, & Lampman, 1994), and is considered one of the most prominent forms of marketing promotion (McDaniel, 1999; Roy & Cornwell, 2004). Given the important role of the consumer in multiple sponsorship objectives, a vast majority of sponsorship research has been dedicated to understanding consumer attitudes towards sponsorship relationships (e.g., Dees, Bennett, & Ferreira, 2010). The literature has proposed an array of factors that generate a favourable response to sponsorship, such as perceived sincerity and ubiquity (Speed & Thompson, 2000).

However, significantly dictating the effectiveness of sponsorship is the theoretical concept of congruence (Fleck & Quester, 2007; Olson & Thjømøe, 2011).

The congruence concept relates to the processing of sponsorship stimuli (Cornwell, Weeks, & Roy, 2005; Johar & Pham, 1999; Speed & Thompson, 2000) and suggests that sponsors will be more willing to sponsor an organisation when congruence characteristics are present between both the sponsor and sponsee (Meenaghan, 1983). This is due to the nature in which congruence can help achieve sponsorship objectives (e.g., reinforce an organisations' positioning; Gwinner & Bennett, 2008) as well as influence both sponsorship motives (Cornwell, Humphreys, Maguire, Weeks, & Tellegen, 2006) and liking for a sponsor in the minds of consumers (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008). Despite the continual progress of congruence research within the sport sponsorship domain, there remain opportunities to explore the role of congruence outside traditional sport sponsorship contexts and provide external validation for proposed dimensions that have mainly been developed through homogenous groups to ensure internal validity (e.g., Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010). Consequently, logic would suggest that an important step forward would be to explore the role of congruence within disability sport sponsorship relationships.

Complementing an investigation into the role of congruence would be an examination of the construct within disability sport sponsorship management practices. Admittedly, sponsors have suggested a long and proud history with disability sporting organisations (Telstra, 2011; Toyota, 2011). Yet, a need remains to investigate these relationships given a lack of theoretical and practical implications relating to disability sport sponsorship (Burton, 2010). As such, extending previous research into a disability sport sponsorship management utilising the congruence construct is highly relevant given congruence has been shown to improve sponsorship effectiveness (Fleck & Quester, 2007). These are just some of the many justifications for the current study. Preceding further rationalisations is a presentation of the overarching research questions for this thesis.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions guiding this thesis were firmly grounded in opportunities identified in the literature review and included two overarching research questions;

Research Question One (RQ1) - What is the role of congruence in disability sport sponsorship relationships?

Research Question Two (RQ2) – What is the role of congruence in disability sport sponsorship management?

1.3. RESEARCH JUSTIFICATIONS

The literature provided many opportunities to contribute to existing knowledge in both disability sport and congruence within sport sponsorship. Research within disability sport is severely limited with publication saturation a far off point on the horizon (Burton, 2010). There have been academic calls to rectify this situation, particularly in “meaningful aspects of disability sports such as...awareness... and specifically how they relate to sponsorship” (Burton, 2010, p. 214). This aligns with justification for studying the sport sponsorship domain as not only do sport sponsees receive a majority of sponsorship (Repucom International, 2010), but empirical studies have also demonstrated that sport is the most popular sponsorship medium (Thwaites, Aguilar-Manjarrez, & Kidd, 1999). Moreover, as nonprofit sporting organisations increase their dependence on corporate sponsorships (Gray & Kendzia, 2009) there is a greater need to understand these relationships (Farrelly *et al.*, 2006). As congruence helps to facilitate sponsorship objectives (Cornwell *et al.*, 2006), this construct enables exploration into different contexts in society where schemas revolve around disability and wheelchair (Woolcott Research, 2010). This is in comparison to current literature that has focused on congruence within mainstream sport settings (e.g., Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011; Turner, Fuller, & Karg, 2010) where associations include ‘exclusivity’ and ‘prestige’ (Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009). When considering that the literature is surprisingly scarce in providing an understanding of disability sponsorship relationships and the role of congruence, the need to advance this area is paramount given the importance of sport for people with a disability (Bailey, 2008).

1.4. RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

The aims of this thesis were to explore the role played by congruence both within disability sport sponsorship relationships and in relation to sponsorship management. The current thesis has striven to provide both theoretical and practical contributions. The extension of congruence into a new context not only adds to the body of knowledge regarding congruence but also provides external validation of existing congruence dimensions. Practical contributions look to assist disability sport

sponsees gain an appreciation of the motivations and objectives of corporate organisations that engage in, and leverage, sponsorship partnerships. More specifically, an objective of this study has been to identify if dimensions of congruence differ across able-bodied sport sponsees and disability sport sponsees in the eyes of corporate organisations. Consequently, the creation of insight for disability sport sponsees, such as the wheelchair tennis athlete David Hall from the opening part of this chapter, to better understand current and sponsors as ongoing revenue sources is achieved. As a result, the current thesis provides research that is “benefiting...our socialised sporting community” (Burton, 2010, p. 214).

1.5. STRUCTURE OF STUDY

The nature of the research questions framing this thesis saw the adoption of an exploratory qualitative approach to investigate the role of congruence both within disability sport sponsorship relationships and related sponsorship management activities. Given the presentation of the research questions and research justification in this initial chapter, four chapters will follow. Chapter two provides a detailed literature review on sponsorship and congruence as well as conceptualisation of the sponsorship management framework. This leads to a conceptual framework that illustrates the key constructs underpinning the research questions (see Figure 2.2). Chapter three provides a discussion on the research methodology, incorporating information pertaining to data collection, data analysis, delimitations and ethical considerations. Found within chapter four are the research findings and related discussions. Chapter five concludes by noting theoretical and practical research contributions, before indicating limitations associated with the study and making suggestions for future research directions.

1.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of chapter one has been to provide an introduction to the current thesis by establishing the context and background for the study. As such, the opportunities found within literature were highlighted to allow for presentation of the research questions. Consequently, research contributions were stated and followed by an outline of the structure for the thesis. A detailed literature review will now occur to discuss key constructs that shape the foundation for this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

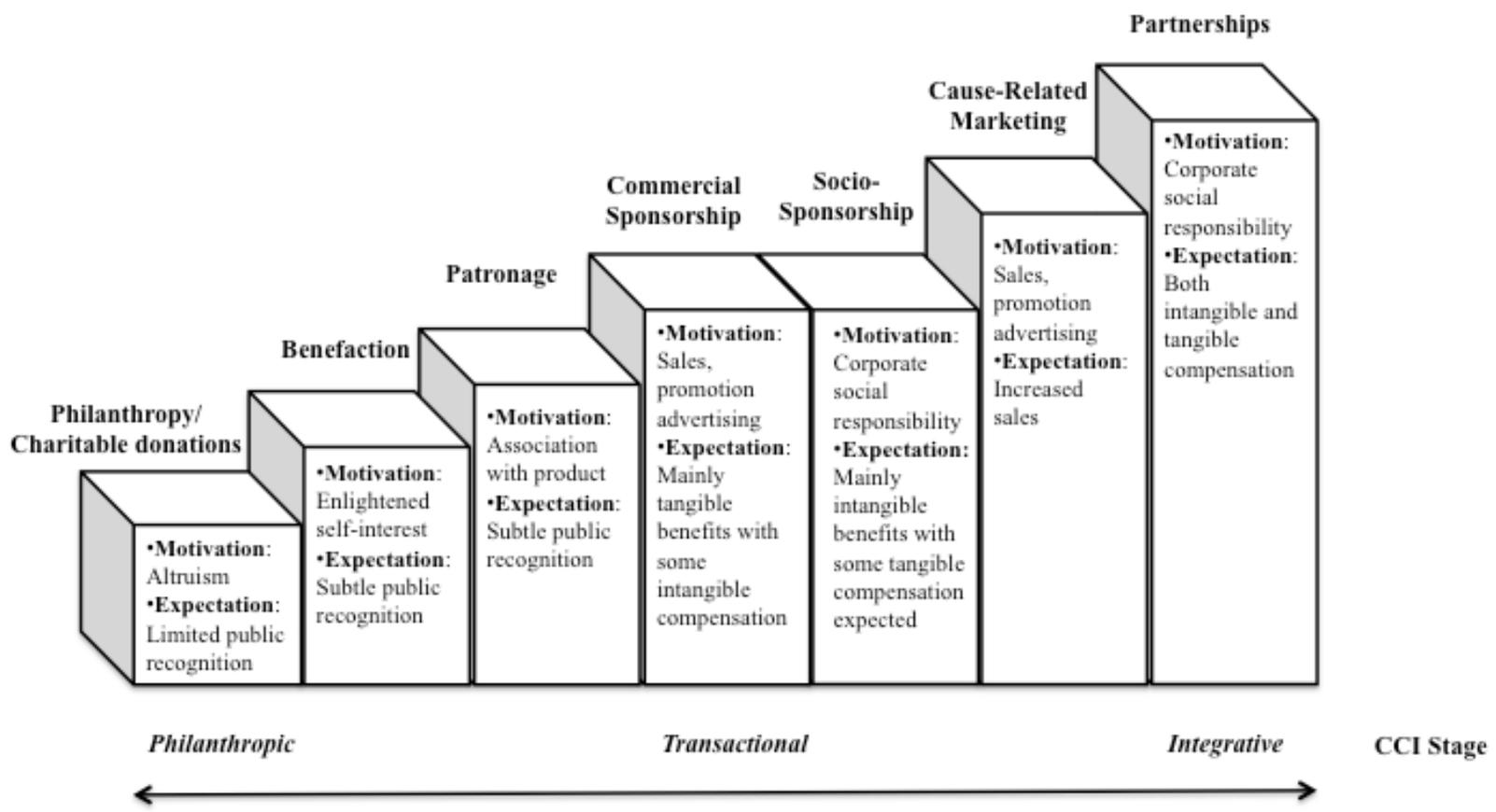
Chapter two presents relevant literature in order to better understand concepts guiding the research questions and incorporates four sections. Firstly, an examination of Austin's (2000) CCI continuum highlights two broad overarching types of sponsorship - commercial and socio-sponsorship. A focus is then placed on defining sponsorship with consideration given to existing frameworks for sponsorship management. As a result, section three establishes the construct of congruence, both within and beyond the sponsorship context, and leads into the presentation of a conceptual framework developed through the literature. The chapter concludes by expanding upon RQ1 and RQ2, and stating key research aims.

2.1. CORPORATE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Over the past two centuries, a progressive increase in the interactions between profit and nonprofit divisions has been witnessed (Austin, 2000) with trends highlighting a growing interest in co-alliances or partnerships (Dickinson & Barker, 2007). The notion of corporate philanthropy and director's choice (Meenaghan, 1983; Thjømøe, Olson, & Bronn, 2002) has evolved into what can now be referred to as CCI (Brammer & Millington, 2004; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007). The CCI continuum is an 'umbrella term' (Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007) and enables classification of different relationship types found between the profit and non-profit sector (Austin, 2000; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007). The various categories displayed in the CCI continuum include corporate 'philanthropy' (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1994; Koten, 1997; Varadarajan & Menon, 1988), 'benefaction' (Coutoupis, 1996), 'patronage' (Parker, 1991), 'sponsorship' (Dolphin, 2003; Javalgi *et al.*, 1994; Meenaghan, 1983; Speed & Thompson, 2000), 'cause-related marketing' (Irwin, Lachowetz, Cornwell, & Clark, 2003; Mekonnen, Harris, & Laing, 2008; Olsen, Pracejus, & Brown, 2003) and 'partnerships' (Seitanidi & Crane, 2009; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007; Simpson, Lefroy, & Tsarenko, 2011). As demonstrated in Figure 2.1, each component of the continuum comprises different stages, motivations, and expectations.

Figure 2.1: Austin's Corporate Community Involvement Continuum

Adapted from Austin (2000); Seitanidi and Ryan (2007)



A shift from the philanthropic end of the continuum, philanthropy or donations, to the juxtaposing integrative stage, partnership, does not necessarily progress in a linear fashion (Austin, 2000). However, classifying and placing relationships into a box along the continuum can be a double-edged sword. This is because the separate categories are suggestive of limiting each relationship with preconceived notions or aiding in the creation of confusion when extrapolating implications for theory and practice (Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007). Indeed, by nature a continuum allows for a progressive evolution, hence the possibility of overlap between two forms of CCI could exist. For example, an overlap could be possible between the two forms of suggested sponsorship – commercial and socio-sponsorship.

Austin (2000) has posited that key differences between commercial and socio-sponsorship pertain to compensation and incentives. Where commercial sponsorship seeks predominately tangible benefits through sales, promotions, and advertising, socio-sponsorship seeks intangible benefits accomplished via the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR; Austin, 2000). While Austin (2000) has made these useful distinctions between commercial and socio-sponsorship, it is recognised that both forms of sponsorship are situated on a continuum. As such, disability sport sponsorship relationships have the potential to demonstrate an overlap between commercial and socio-sponsorship objectives, and motives, due to the nature of the organisation and an ability to exploit both tangible and intangible benefits. To explore these notions in more detail, chapter two now focuses solely on sponsorship as a benefit exchange vehicle for commercial organisations and nonprofits.

2.2. SPONSORSHIP

2.2.1. Defining Sponsorship

Sponsorship is big business. The roots of sponsorship can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome where bloody battles between gladiators saw only one man left alive (Carrigan & Carrigan, 1997). In today's society, sponsorship is less of a risk in terms of physical life and death but has become a multi-billion dollar industry world wide (IEG, 2011). As a result, it is an industry that provides numerous ways through which organisations can survive and prosper (Simpson *et al.*, 2011).

As demonstrated in Austin's (2000) CCI theory, a gradual increase in interactions between the profit and nonprofit sectors has been observed (Simpson *et*

al., 2011). This was due in part to the recognition that the philanthropic nature of sponsorship was inhibiting its growth (Parker, 1991). Thus, the previous few decades have seen an evolution within the realm of sponsorship from that of a philanthropic gesture to sponsorship securing a place within the marketing mix (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Javalgi *et al.*, 1994; Polonsky & Speed, 2001). It is even considered by some to be the equivalent of advertising (Dolphin, 2003) in terms of performance (Meenaghan, 1998) with suggestion sponsorship has become the marketing tool of the twenty-first century (Tripodi, 2001). Indeed, in the last ten years, sponsorship expenditure has grown from \$13 billion worldwide to more than \$48 billion since 1996 (IEG, 2011). Within this sum, the vast majority (i.e. 60-70%) is sport sponsorship related (IEG, 2011). These statistics demonstrate the progressive leaps made within this industry (Meenaghan, 1998) as well as reinforce the importance of this research area as a key revenue source for sport sponsees or right owners, particularly those of nonprofit orientation.

However, whilst the past two decades have seen the growth of sponsorship outperform other promotional tools (Tripodi, 2001), the ambiguity and lack of an accepted definition (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Erdogan & Kitchen, 1998; Sleight, 1989) within the sponsorship literature has resulted in numerous attempts to define and capture the essence of sponsorship (Cornwell, 1995; Erdogan & Kitchen, 1998; Meenaghan, 1991). Indeed, Sleight (1989) described sponsorship as “one of the most abused and misunderstood words in the English language” (p. 3). Consequently, many definitions, with many alterations, exist within the sponsorship arena and some have stood the test of time more so than others (Arthur, Scott, & Woods, 1997; Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010). One such definition is provided by (Meenaghan, 1991) and is employed throughout this thesis;

An investment in cash or kind, in an activity, in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that activity. (p. 36)

This definition is sufficiently broad as to encompass the variety of motives and drivers pursued within a sponsor-property relationship (Meenaghan, 1983). It also highlights the important underlying nature of exchange found in sponsorship thus differentiating sponsorship from terms such as patronage or benefaction (Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007). Admittedly, there are many more varieties of the sponsorship definition; however, the core or essence of all definitions remains consistent with

terminology, breadth, and focus, discerning one definition from another (Cornwell, 1995, Tripodi, 2001).

In a similar fashion to the holistic progression of sponsorship, perceptions of sponsorship value have shifted markedly in recent times. For example, there has been a change from tactical to strategic direction, transactional to relationship-orientated, short-term to long-term (Farrelly, 2010; Farrelly *et al.*, 2006), as well as periphery to core corporate and brand positioning thereby ensuring greater brand meaning (Cornwell, 1995; Farrelly & Quester, 2005). Research has suggested that successful sponsorships display reciprocal commitment, sponsorship-led brand building capabilities and collaborative capabilities enabling goal alignment (Farrelly *et al.*, 2006). As such, sport sponsees have had to adapt and become more commercialised over time (Meenaghan & O'Sullivan, 2001).

2.2.2. Current Issues within the Sponsorship Literature

In line with the commercialisation and growth of sponsorship as a marketing tool has been the research dedicated to sponsorship (Cornwall, 2008), albeit the suggestion that it is a scholarly area still “riddled by ambiguity” (Dolphin, 2003, p. 184) and one that seriously lacks an understanding of sponsorship relationship dynamics (Olkkonen, 2001). However, research has highlighted three common threads that can be considered characteristic of sponsorship investigations (Olkkonen & Tuominen, 2006). The first two topics relate to definitional and promotional issues. More pertinent to this thesis is the third theme relating to managerial concerns (Olkkonen & Tuominen, 2006), which involve objectives or drivers (Garry *et al.*, 2008) of commercial organisations who incorporate sponsorship into their marketing mix strategies (Olkkonen & Tuominen, 2006). Guiding sponsorship objectives, and related to managerial concerns, are established sponsorship management frameworks.

2.2.3. Frameworks for Sponsorship

Playing an essential role in the efficiency of contributions to an organisation’s communication objectives are comprehensive sponsorship management frameworks (Arthur, Scott, Woods, & Booker, 1998; Thwaites, 1995). Sponsorship management frameworks simultaneously provide tools for sponsorship managers as well as allow frameworks for researchers to investigate sponsorship issues. The research conducted by Farrelly *et al.* (2006) presented validation of the importance of utilising a

sponsorship management framework. The authors suggested that problems arose when a culture was built around securing rather than managing a sponsorship (Farrelly *et al.*, 2006). Farrelly *et al.* (2006) also expressed the significance of commitment, clear and articulated requirements, and expectations found in the dyadic relationship to help ensure agreed upon obligations are met and maximised.

Underpinning the sport sponsorship management framework is the general model of decision-making, which has no specific referent; however, Ray (1973) was one of the first to utilise the sequence analysis in marketing communications (Cornwell, 1995). A number of researchers have adapted the general model of decision-making into the sponsorship arena (Arthur *et al.*, 1997; Arthur *et al.*, 1998; Cornwell, 1995; Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Lund, 2010) thus accepting the task of modeling “the complex and challenging” sponsorship construct (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2004, p. 40). Although sponsorship has been criticised for lacking an “integrated and coherent body of empirical research” (Dolphin, 2003, p. 176) and “theoretical and conceptual foundations” (Garry, Broderick, & Lahiffe, 2008, p. 960), the consensus across the literature is that of a strategic starting point, followed by defining objectives, sponsorship selection and implementation, and concluding with sponsorship evaluation (Arthur *et al.*, 1997; Cornwell, 1995; Lund, 2010). Recent developments of sport sponsorship management frameworks have included the proposal of a cyclical version of these components (Karg, 2007). This justified and logical process model enables the basic requirements for sponsorship communication objectives or goals to be achieved and benefits obtained (Arthur *et al.*, 1998).

Past literature opined this situation as being a win-win for both the sponsor and sponsee as it allows for benefits to be reciprocally exchanged (Shilbury *et al.*, 2009) and thus reinforces Meenaghan’s (1991) definition of sponsorship. However, there is general agreement that benefits are not received simultaneously (Farrelly, 2010; Farrelly *et al.*, 2006; Hoek, Gendall, Jeffcoat, & Orsman, 1997). For example, initially the sponsee may receive revenue from rights fees but the sponsor may receive benefits of increased consumer awareness in the form of sales at a much later date, providing the association has been effectively leveraged (Farrelly, 2010). Indeed, many years may pass before sponsors receive value generated from the sponsorship relationship (Speed & Thompson, 2000). This points to the importance of clearly establishing strategies not only when the initial relationship is formed but also ensuring continuous measurement and appropriate sponsee selection.

2.2.3.1. *Sponsorship Selection, Implementation and Measurement*

Sponsorship selection not only involves the initial sponsorship agreement entered into by sponsors and sponsees but also the renewal of a sponsorship relationship (Arthur *et al.*, 1998). Found within this selection process are multiple criteria that have been used to determine what sponsorship arrangements should, or should not, be entered into (Walliser, 2003). Pertinently, Thwaites *et al.* (1999) has suggested that a clean image may be virtually a prerequisite for the sponsee. As such, literature has proposed image and functional congruence as among the most important sponsorship selection criteria (Irwin, Asimakopoulos, & Sutton, 1994; Copeland, Frisby, & McCarville, 1996; Marshall & Cook, 1992; Turner *et al.*, 2010) thereby highlighting the critical role of congruence in the selection process (Mason, 2005). Moreover, decisions to select a particular sponsee may be based upon rational or emotional motives (Arthur *et al.*, 1997), or stem from existing evaluation models (e.g., Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Meenaghan, 1983).

Once the sponsorship relationship has been formed, in order to be implemented properly, it needs to be correctly leveraged (Arthur *et al.*, 1998; Fahy, Farrelly, & Quester, 2004). When considering sponsorship is only one part of an organisation's communication mix, the value of correctly integrating the medium into the overall strategy has been shown to maximise synergy, thereby creating a powerful image for the company (Amis, Slack, & Berrett, 1999; Tripodi, 2001). While congruence is considered in detail in subsequent sections, it is important to note that the construct contributes to the effectiveness of communication activities designed to leverage sponsorship relationships (Fleck & Quester, 2007). However, measuring the effectiveness created through sponsorship has been perceived as difficult (Harvey, 2001; Horn & Baker, 1999) and remains a contentious issue within the sponsorship domain (Dolphin, 2003) despite a need to justify a return on investment (Stotlar, 2004). Measurement difficulties arise for a number of reasons and include an inability to separate sponsorship effects from other communication efforts due to their simultaneous usage (Walliser, 2003). Further, the time delay in benefits received between a sponsor and sponsee have also been posited as hindering measurement activities (Farrelly, 2010; Farrelly *et al.*, 2006). Posing fewer issues to sponsorship relationships, albeit still potentially just as ambiguous, are the multiple objectives and motives found within a sponsorship relationship and as such will now be discussed.

2.2.3.2. *Sponsorship Strategy and Objectives*

Literature has proposed differing links exist between sponsorship activities and corporate strategy (Berrett & Slack, 1999). However, corporate strategy is strengthened when the sponsorship medium is utilised as a strategic approach to marketing (Dolphin, 2003) thereby enabling the development of corporate advantages (Fahy *et al.*, 2004) and positive returns (Aguilar-Manjarrez, Thwaites, & Maule, 1997). Moreover, when sponsorship objectives are congruent with organisational objectives, strategy alignment is achieved (Farrelly, Quester & Burton, 1997; Irwin & Amisakopoulos, 1992).

Macbeth's notion, "in one fell swoop" aptly captures the ability of sponsorship to simultaneously achieve multiple objectives (Cornwell, Roy, Edward, & Steinar, 2001), despite a tendency for these objectives to be vague in nature (Javalgi *et al.*, 1994). Indeed, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to define and pinpoint the numerous objectives related to sponsorship as others have already focused on this topic (e.g., Cordeio, Quah, Smart, & Shah, 2005; Dolphin, 2003; Javalgi *et al.*, 1994; Karg, 2007; Meenaghan, 1991). However, the following discussion emphasises key sponsorship objectives applicable to the disability sport sponsorship context.

When considering sponsorship relationships, an array of terminology is used interchangeably to represent the main intentions and expectations for its outcomes. For example, some discuss expectations as sponsorship 'objectives' for such outcomes as the boosting of staff morale (Tripodi, 2001) or using sponsorship as a 'driver' to alter public perceptions (Grimes & Meenaghan, 1998). Others have spoken in terms of sponsorship 'goals' or 'benefits' such as enhanced sales or increased goodwill (Gwinner, 1997; Shilbury *et al.*, 2009). These examples seek to highlight the terminology clutter found within this domain. However, it is evident that sponsorship objectives span across and dynamically contribute to numerous dimensions within sponsor-property relationships (Thwaites, 1995).

Regardless of whether studies have employed the terms objectives or goals, there has been a recent shift in primary sponsorship objectives (Dolphin, 2003). Whereas past sponsorship relationships focused on media exposure as the primary objective (Grohs, Wagner, & Vsetecka, 2004), current sponsorship relationships have viewed the medium as a tool to ultimately alter purchase behaviour and thus facilitate sales objectives (Austin, 2000; Desbordes, Ohl, & Tribou, 2004; Meenaghan, 1991).

This is achieved through utilising sponsorship to enhance image and awareness (Gwinner, 1997; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999), given target market congruence (Doherty, & Murray, 2007). The evolution of sponsorship objectives can be seen within the CCI continuum where sponsorship is clearly distinguished from philanthropic or ‘director’s choice’ origins (Meenaghan, 1998) with potential to extend to partnerships where strategic objectives are a priority (Dolphin, 2003; Fahy *et al.*, 2004).

Desbordes *et al.* (2004) provided one example of classifying succinctly the differing, and pertinent, sponsorship objectives – communication, brand, and commercial objectives. Within these objectives, unique access to interests and ideologies, often perceived to be lacking, are granted to commercial organisations when a relationship with a nonprofit is formed (Simpson *et al.*, 2011). Subsequently, sponsorship arrangements provide a distinctive link between the objectives of a sponsor and sponsee in order to achieve an exchange of benefits (Shilbury *et al.*, 2009; Simpson *et al.*, 2011). Related to sponsorship objectives, and often used interchangeably with, are motivations for sport sponsorship relationships.

2.2.4. Motivations for Sport Sponsorship

Sport is unique in the passion, emotion, heroes, and attachments it creates (Quester & Thompson, 2001; Seguin, Richelieu, & O’Reilly, 2008). It also provides a vehicle to access niche or multi-segment target markets (Meenaghan, 1991; Thwaites, 1995). Other motivators captured within sport sponsorship are the ability of sports to transcend cultural, lingual, and geographic boundaries (Quester & Thompson, 2001). This has not gone unnoticed by sponsorship managers with sport sponsorship representing the majority of their spending (IEG, 2011). Encapsulating the epitome of sports sponsorship is the Olympic movement (Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009). Associative symbolism runs rife in this context, especially in regards to the Olympic rings. Seguin *et al.* (2008) suggested these associations include success, high standards, international co-operation, a force for world peace and a source of national pride. Subsequently, sponsors have specifically referred to the Olympic brand as having rich “associative imagery” (Seguin *et al.*, 2008, p. 8). Enabling associative symbolism to occur in the minds of consumers, which can then trigger trust and loyalty towards a sports brand, is the concept of congruence (Cornwell *et al.*, 2006; Gwinner & Bennett, 2008; Seguin *et al.*, 2008).

Given that not all research confirms the value of sport sponsorship, even within an Olympic context (Miyazaki & Morgan, 2001), many corporations are asking themselves whether sponsoring the Olympic Games is worth the large financial outlay (Soderman & Dolles, 2008). This is further compounded when other sponsorship avenues, such as sponsorship at a national sporting level, have been shown to rapidly aid redefinition of brand values (Alexander, 2009) and provide a competitive advantage, given congruence has been employed effectively (Turner *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, important social and economic issues are forcing organisations to refocus on notions such as CSR (Babiak, 2010; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Sagawa & Segal, 2000). CSR can be successfully communicated through cause sponsorship (Geue & Plewa, 2010) thereby achieving not only community involvement sponsorship objectives but also altering public perceptions (Dolphin, 2003) to leverage corporate reputation (Javalgi *et al.*, 1994). As such, both the applicability of disability sport sponsorship relationships and congruence are naturally apparent. Further, when considering these relationships enable sponsors to connect with Paralympic athletes, specific intricacies and complexities of disability sport sponsorships need to be considered.

2.2.5. Disability Sport Sponsorship

The nature of Paralympic Sport means that disability sport sponsees can offer a unique brand to sponsors. Specifically, Paralympians have the ability to influence society by challenging peoples' perceptions of normality, ability, and capabilities (Bailey, 2008). Moreover, Paralympians can inspire and motivate individuals to become active and take on new challenges (Bailey, 2008). However, research regarding disability sport, and consequently from a sponsor's perspective on disability sport, remains scarce (Burton, 2010). Indeed, to this author's knowledge, there is no study that has exclusively sought to determine selection motives, objectives, or leveraging activities of disability sport sponsorship relationships. Furthermore, the specific context provides opportunities to consider sport sponsees outside the classic sport sponsorship domains in Australia such as Australian Football League (AFL) or National Rugby League (NRL; e.g., Farrelly, 2010; Farrelly *et al.*, 2006; Kelly & Whiteman, 2010; Turner *et al.*, 2010).

Given the focus on disability sport sponsorship, it needs to be taken into account that the power dynamics and ideological imbalances found within

sponsorship relationships still favour the commercial entity (Ryan & Fahy, 2003; Simpson *et al.*, 2011). Consequently, a “lack of symmetry during implementation” limits interaction and flexibility found within sponsor-property relationships (Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007, p. 255). Strengthening evidence of imbalance in sponsor-property relationships lies in nonprofits relying heavily on sponsorships for income (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004) with the potential of producing a feeling of reduced bargaining power (Simpson *et al.*, 2011). As such, Simonin (1997) suggested that this can lead to coercion within the sponsorship relationship.

In contrast to the nonprofit perspective, are commercial organisations that want to gain more for their brand (Dickinson & Barker, 2007) thereby favouring associations with prestigious nonprofits to improve their own image (Piperno, 1996). Contributing to the current sponsorship environment, is a trend from sponsoring big, established sports, towards niche sport sponsorships (such as skateboarding, surfing and snowboarding; Shilbury *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, research has confirmed that disability sport organisations, such as the APC, are not a “top of mind organisation” (Woolcott Research, 2010, p.1). When consideration is given to all of these factors, the desired sponsorship objectives of the disability sport sponsee may not always align with that of the sponsor.

In this light, motivations behind sponsorship have been a source of skepticism within the minds of consumers (Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007; Szykman, Bloom, & Blaizing, 2004). Logically this leads to questions such as, what tools facilitate the portrayal of socio-sponsorship relationships? Specifically, can these socio-sponsorships project CSR and altruistic motives when elements of commercial motivations and expectations exist? Research has proposed that the theoretical concept of congruence provides a tool to answer these questions within the domain of sponsorship (e.g., Johar & Pham, 1999; McDaniel, 1999; Rifon, Choi, Trimble, & Li, 2004; Speed & Thompson, 2000). As a result, discussions will now focus upon the construct of congruence.

2.3. CONGRUENCE

In order to gain an understanding of the role played by congruence within disability sport sponsorship relationships, a sound theoretical foundation must first be provided. The following discussion highlights congruence within and beyond the sponsorship domain before defining the construct. A brief explanation on congruence

theories, congruence dimension, and the inhibitors of congruence within sponsorship, concludes this portion of the literature review.

2.3.1. Defining Congruence Within and Beyond the Sponsorship Domain

Before sponsorship can affect consumer behaviour, it must have some form of mental impact (Poon & Prendergast, 2006). Congruence not only creates intellectual stimulus (Cornwell *et al.*, 2006) but also aids multiple sponsorship objectives (Thwaites, 1995). Furthermore, it provides a lens for which to examine various motives within sponsorship relationships (Cornwell *et al.*, 2001; Tripodi, 2001). Akin to the plethora of available definitions for sponsorship within the literature, there has been an extensive commitment to the examination of congruence across an array of fields such as management, marketing, and sponsorship. This makes reviewing the construct difficult, not least because of the numerous branches relating to congruence but also the interchangeable terminology used to describe it (Fleck & Quester, 2007). Conversely, the numerous terms associated with congruence may enable the varied demands of discourse to be enhanced through “versatility and generality of words and phrases” (Cafagna, 1960, p. 113). Indeed, evidence of terms such as ‘fit’ (Basil & Basil, 2003; Speed & Thompson, 2000), ‘match’ (McDaniel, 1999; Turner *et al.*, 2010), or ‘relatedness’ (Johar & Pham, 1999), have all been used to convey what is essentially the same concept within the literature (Fleck & Quester, 2007; Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011).

Beginning with the research domain of management, semantical operationalisations of congruence have been associated with suggestions that strategic management, organisation theory, and behaviour structures should ‘fit’ (Egeihoff, 1982) or be ‘aligned’ (White & Hamermesh, 1981) with an organisation’s environment and strategy. Within marketing literature, the term ‘congruence’ has been associated with a “vague concept” (Fleck & Quester, 2007, p. 977) but can specifically be related to brand research, in particular brand extensions (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Boush & Loken, 1991; Broniarczyk & Alba, 1994; Lane, 2000; Park, Millberg & Lawson, 1991; Sheinin & Schmitt, 1994; Tauber, 1993) or co-branding communication efforts (Park, Jun, & Schocker, 1996; Simonin & Ruth, 1998), using related terms such as ‘fit’ (Tauber, 1993), ‘similarity’ (Boush *et al.*, 1987), or ‘congruence’ (Lane, 2000).

Similarly, conceptualisations of congruence within the sponsorship literature have demonstrated multiple terminologies, with the majority still holding a place in current discourse (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011). For example, initial research sought to determine the ‘link’ between an event and sponsor on a continuum (Otker & Hayes, 1988). Other studies examined the term ‘relatedness’ within the context of sponsorship (Johar & Pham, 1999; McDonald, 1991) or referred to a ‘match’ (Gwinner, 1997; McDaniel, 1999; Richelieu & Lopez, 2008; Turner *et al.*, 2010) based on image or functional similarities within the sponsor-property relationship (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). Other terminology has included ‘compatibility’ (Ruth & Simonin, 2003), ‘relevancy’ (Rodgers, 2003; Poon & Prendergast, 2006), or ‘similarity’ (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006).

However, the terms ‘congruence’ and ‘fit’ have received substantial use within the sponsorship literature (Becker-Olsen & Simmons, 2002; Fleck & Quester, 2007; Kelly & Whiteman, 2010; Koo, Quarterman, & Flynn, 2006; Menon & Kahn, 2003; Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011; Rifon *et al.*, 2004; Speed & Thompson, 2000) with many authors relying on previous literature to explain the construct (Fleck & Quester, 2007; Johar & Pham, 1999; McDaniel, 1999). As a result, a summary of existing explanations is used in this thesis to define congruence as;

A central theoretical concept based on symbolic matching properties between the sponsor and sponsee; related to the processing and transfer of sponsorship stimulus; examined on a multidimensional basis and found to influence a wide variety of sponsorship outcomes and communications (Cornwell *et al.*, 2005; Cornwell *et al.*, 2006; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Martensen, Gronholdt, Bendtsen, & Jensen, 2007; Menon & Kahn, 2003; Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011, Rifon *et al.*, 2004; Roy & Cornwell 2003; Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006; Speed & Thompson, 2000).

In light of this definition, it is recognised that a consistent understanding of congruence is linked to an effective ability to facilitate favourable outcomes desired by orchestrating parties (Fleck & Quester, 2007). That is to say, certain benefits can be achieved when an attempt is made to align various macro-dimensions (e.g., prominence or marketing strategy; Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010) to sub-dimensions (e.g., geographic similarity, image or function similarity; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011; Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, if ‘natural’ congruence is not

present, 'artificial' enhancement of congruence through articulation messages has been found to be successful (Cornwell *et al.*, 2006; Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006). However, conflicting research has shown benefits when there is a high level (Cornwell *et al.*, 2005) or moderate level of congruence (Meyers-Levy, Louie, & Curren, 1994; Meyers-Levy & Tybout, 1989; Sheinin & Schmitt, 1994) whereas others speculate incongruence may be of benefit to a sponsorship relationship (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2009; Fleck & Quester, 2007). Preceding a discussion that illuminates these inconsistencies across the literature is an examination of the benefits obtained as a result of congruence.

2.3.2. Benefits of Congruence

When approaching congruence from a global perspective, the literature has highlighted its importance in achieving communication goals or the value added to sponsorship effectiveness (Cornwell, 2008; Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011). Of particular significance within this thesis is the beneficial role congruence plays in facilitating awareness, recognition, recall and an ability to evoke a positive attitude towards the sponsor and brand (Cornwell *et al.* 2006; Cornwell *et al.*, 2005; Johar & Pham, 1999; McDaniel, 1999; Martensen *et al.* 2007; Menon & Kahn, 2003; Olson, 2010; Roy & Cornwell, 2003; Simmons & Becker-Olsen 2006; Speed & Thompson, 2000; Wakefield, Becker-Olsen, & Cornwell, 2007). Indeed, multiple studies have demonstrated how congruence facilitates brand image transfer (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Becker-Olsen & Simmons, 2002) and a change in brand attitude (McDaniel, 1999; Rodgers, 2003; Speed & Thompson, 2000). Evidence strengthening the benefits of congruence can be found in research that has shown how congruence aids sponsorship recall when there is a strong perceived relationship (i.e. congruence) within an Olympic sponsorship brand context (Stipp, 1998; Stipp & Shiavone, 1996). As such, there can remain little doubt that congruence plays a significant role in shaping the effectiveness of communication in sponsor-property relationships (Fleck & Quester, 2007).

Whilst some of the many benefits of congruence have been identified, it is important to recognise that the differing roles played by congruence across unexplored contexts would aid in placing one more piece into the congruence jigsaw puzzle. Cornwell (2008) suggested it would be beneficial to investigate congruence within a commercial orientated sponsor-property relationship versus a socio-

sponsorship. Cornwell (2008) also speculated that congruence might be used to emphasise different characteristics in different sponsor-property relationships. For example, it is posited that image transfer and development of goodwill may be more pertinent within a charitable sponsorship arrangement (Cornwell, 2008). This is in contrast to the proposition that for a commercial sport sponsorship, the role of congruence in brand identification and differentiation may have greater applicability (Cornwell, 2008). Turner et al. (2010) consolidated this by proposing investigations should explore different types of sponsorships where different levels of congruence in terms of renewals (i.e., different stages along the sponsorship life cycle) are present.

Disability sport sponsorships provided a context to create insight into both these scenarios as they are not only associated with notions such as disability and wheelchairs (Woolcott Research, 2010), but also operate within an increasingly commercialised environment where sponsorship duration and type (i.e., financial, services and product) vary. This would then also answer the call from Farrelly et al. (2006) for examining sponsorships of various financial contributions and leads into determining the extent that organisations utilise congruence within a sponsorship relationship to reach specific audiences (Dolphin, 2003). To shed light on how these questions may be answered, an understanding of the theories underpinning congruence is now presented.

2.3.3. How Congruence Works: Theories Underpinning the Concept

Underlying the concept of congruence within the sponsorship arena are a number of interrelated theories and hypotheses, which in essence offer complementary constructs presented from a management perspective (Cornwell *et al*, 2005). Firstly, Rogers (2003) proposed that many authors who have investigated congruence either acknowledge or assume the congruity principle. The congruity principle suggests congruent information is favoured over incongruent information (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955) and is supported by strong associative networks to help ensure a connection between the sponsor and sponsee (Rogers, 2003). A discussion on complementary theories and principles to further illustrate the congruity principle will now occur.

2.3.3.1. *Schema Theory*

A schema is a hypothetical cognitive structure that develops over time as a result of experiences and helps to shape how people process information (Taylor & Crocker, 1981). Consequently, a schema guides perception, thought or action based on an individual's previous knowledge (McDaniel, 1999). When examining schema theory in a sport sponsorship context, it is important to note that sponsors target consumers who value the sponsored property (e.g., the Olympics, Crimmins & Horn, 1996). As such, it is probable that the consumer will already have an established set of schemas related to the sport property (McDaniel, 1999). Thus, when congruence is present, it is more likely that the established sport property schemas held in memory will be stimulated (Koo *et al.*, 2006). This results in the incorporation of ideas about the sponsorship activity aligning with the existing sport property schema set (Koo *et al.*, 2006).

2.3.3.2. *Associative Networks Principle*

Literature has also posited the associative networks principle as a theoretical framework for sponsorship effects (Rogers, 2003), either through specifically highlighting the model or assuming it to be so (Cornwell *et al.*, 2005). Whilst the concept is used heavily in the marketing literature (Keller, 1993; 2001), the foundations are drawn from basic psychological theory on information processing (Cornwell, 2008; Rogers, 2003). To briefly summarise this body of work, a network of associations (Anderson, 1973) are connected by links with various degrees of strength (Rogers, 2003). These links provide the perceived strength of congruence in a sponsor-property relationship with suggestions that stronger links have a greater power of persuasion when compared to weaker links (Rogers, 2003). However, existing research has found mixed results where strong associative links are thought to be present (d'Astous & Bitz, 1995; McDaniel, 1999) thereby making the exact nature of links unclear (Rogers, 2003). Devised methods to overcome this uncertainty have included communicating semantic features, a sponsor's descriptive elements and its alliance, thereby ensuring crystallisation within the minds of consumers (Rogers, 2003). Consequently, congruence results in sponsorships influencing memory, attitudes and behavioural intentions (Rogers, 2003).

2.3.3.3. *Attribution Theory and the Discounting Principle*

Similar to the associative networks principle, attribution theory and the discounting principle shape perceptions of sponsor motivations. Based on the assumption that individuals make causal inferences regarding observed events and experiences (Heider, 1958; Jones & Davis, 1966; Kelley, 1973), the generation of inferences enable beliefs to be formed that aid in understanding of the observable world and thus form attributes. Attributions are shaped by either intrinsic or extrinsic motives (Heider, 1958). When extrinsic motivation is present, intrinsic motivation is discounted in favour of extrinsic motivation to explain an event (Rifon *et al.*, 2004). This is demonstrated within the celebrity match-up hypothesis where a celebrity endorses a particular product or event (Misra & Beatty, 1990; Schaffer & Keillor, 1997). Motives for the endorser within this scenario can fall into two categories, (1) the endorser believes in the quality of the product or event (intrinsic motivation), or (2) the endorser wishes to leverage the situation to make financial gains (external motivation; Sparkman, 1982).

In the same way, when a commercial corporation sponsors a nonprofit, the sponsorship can be viewed as either internal motivation (the cause is worthy of support) or external motivation (the cause will generate favourable benefits for the corporation such as financial gain; Bendapudi, Singh, & Bendapudi, 1996; Piliavin & Hong-Wen, 1990). As a result of attribution theory and the discounting principle, if congruence exists between the sponsor and sponsee, this will generate stronger consumer attributions of altruistic motives as internal motivators have not been discounted (Rifon *et al.*, 2004). This suggests that congruence will enhance attitudes of consumers towards a product and the corresponding sponsored brand (Johar & Pham, 1999; McDaniel, 1999). However, not all research has supported the discounting principle. Geue and Plewa (2010) found that congruent value-driven cause sponsorships elicited perceptions of higher egoistic motivations. Notably, congruence was based upon the broad dimensions of relevancy and expectancy (Geue & Plewa, 2010) whereas Rifon *et al.* (2004) employed the micro-dimensions of functional and target market congruence, along with an implied image dimension. While a discussion on dimensions will be explained forthwith, it is important to recognise how subtle differences in research design may impact upon a study's results. As complementing theories have now been presented, the following section

details how congruence has been measured when the construct is based upon a holistic concept as opposed to recent dimensional approaches.

2.3.4. Measuring Congruence

Most of the work done to measure the dimensions of congruence, for the sake of simplicity and parsimony, has constructed a unidimensional model (i.e., low fit – high fit; Speed & Thompson 2000) or relied upon obvious fitting sponsorship pairings such as the **functional** fit of Nike and sporting events (e.g., Johar & Pham 1999). However, the past decade has seen the concept of congruence in the sponsorship context develop from that of a unidimensional construct to a multifaceted component (Fleck & Quester, 2007; Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011; Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010).

Early congruence research produced measures of congruence through ratings based on broad concepts such as **logical connection**, **makes sense**, **stand for similar things**, and **image** (Speed & Thompson, 2000). Contrastingly, other authors have specified **image** congruence as a dimension (Gwinner, 1997; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Howard & Crompton, 2004; Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011), with this thesis adopting a similar approach. Others have measured whether a good fit exists through scales ranging from ‘poorly matched’ to ‘matched’ (Roy & Cornwell, 2003), or from ‘not complementary’ to ‘complementary’ (Ruth & Simonin, 2003). This is in contrast to studies that have measured the dimension of **brand equity** and congruence (Roy & Cornwell, 2003). Roy and Cornwell (2003) found that in general, low equity brands (i.e., low media spending levels) were perceived as having poor congruence if sponsoring high equity objects (i.e., important and well known).

However, with the exception of one study (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999), it was not until recently that multiple dimensions of congruence were given greater attention within the literature (Chien, Cornwell, & Pappu, 2011; Fleck & Quester, 2007; Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011; Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010). Gwinner and Bennett (2008) found that the two variables, **brand cohesiveness** and **sport identification**, positively influence congruence with specific reference to the match-up hypothesis and schema theory. A two-dimensional scale for congruence based on **relevancy** and **expectancy** has also been shown to positively correlate with overall fit (Fleck & Quester, 2007). The scale was adopted from a psychological perspective within the specific context of advertising (Heckler & Childers, 1992), and as such is underpinned by predetermined schemas that allow for the development of understanding.

It has been argued that the dimensions proposed for congruence were still rather broad and difficult to apply practically in the managerial decision-making process (Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010) as the constructs did not provide a foundation for understanding *why* a certain brand was either **expected** or **relevant** as a sponsor (Olson & Thjømøe, 2011). Furthermore, the seminal work completed by Gwinner and Eaton (1999) was based on Aaker's (1997) brand-personality scale, and while the scale has been commonly used in the marketing literature, it has not been proven as a measure to predict overall congruence (Olson & Thjømøe, 2011). As a result, recent studies have created multiple dimensions to measure congruence and have been summarised into Appendix A. Appendix A also provides definitions, examples, and where appropriate, similarity with other dimensions has been highlighted.

Within Zdravkovic *et al.*'s (2010) two macro-dimensions of **prominence** and **marketing strategy** are ten micro-dimensions (**visibility, explicitness, slogan, mission, colour composition, target market, promotional activities, geographic compatibility, local attributes, and active involvement**) that contribute to the overall level of congruence between the sponsor and sponsee. Some of the micro-dimensions share elements with explanations of congruence perceptions from the literature. Both **target market** match and **geographical** compatibility are found within Olson and Thjømøe's (2011) dimensions for congruence. Moreover, **target market** match is similar to Cornwell *et al.*'s (2005) description of congruence to both the object and sponsors' **target audience**. **Attitude towards sponsor** and **attitude towards brand** dimensions adopted from Simmons and Becker-Olsen (2006) by Zdravkovic *et al.* (2010) can be related to **attitude similarity** found in Olson and Thjømøe (2011), whereas **time duration of sponsorship** (Olson & Thjømøe, 2011) shows an association with Fleck and Quester's (2007) broad **expectancy** dimension. Further, Olson and Thjømøe's (2011) dimension of **product use and relevance** is akin to the **natural** congruence conditions found within Becker-Olsen and Simmons (2002) or **direct product relevance** as suggested by McDaniel (1999). It is also interchangeable with **functional** based similarity dimension (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Howard & Crompton, 2004). However, disagreements over certain dimensions of congruence exist within the literature. For example, some studies have found that **image** or **visibility** dimensions were related to overall congruence (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Howard & Crompton, 2004; McDaniel, 1999; Speed & Thompson, 2000;

Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010), whereas other research has not confirmed this (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011).

In contrast to dimensions that are relevant across a sponsorship dyad, is a dimension that is applicable solely to a sponsor and is known as **sponsorship category relatedness** (Chien *et al.*, 2011). Given a sponsorship portfolio, **sponsorship category relatedness** (hereafter referred to as **portfolio congruence**) has been shown to aid brand personality, brand meaning through unity and clarity (Chien *et al.*, 2011).

The development and refinement of dimensions for congruence has occurred primarily via student participants (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011; Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010) thereby has potential external validity shortcomings (Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010). Consequently, this is of concern as external validation plays a critical role in the research process (McGrath & Brinberg, 1983). As such, Zdravkovic *et al.* (2010) speculated that an opportunity exists to explore whether current dimensions are applicable within a broader subject pool along with possible identification of additional dimensions.

The preceding discussion has demonstrated how various scholars have provided congruence dimensions that allow sponsorship managers to efficiently choose and manage sponsorship relationships, especially where the sponsor has no natural congruence with the sponsored entity. While high natural congruence can be artificially enhanced via various articulation messages (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006), this strategy should be considered in light of the following discussion that contrasts perspectives on the optimal level of congruence.

2.3.5. Different Levels of Congruence

It has been frequently demonstrated that within a sponsorship relationship, a higher level of congruence can result in benefits such as higher recall and recognition accuracy (Cornwell *et al.*, 2005). However, the inconsistency of results has alluded to dynamic relationships requiring differing levels of congruence in order to achieve optimal benefits. Currently, benefits have been examined across popular sporting domains, such as NASCAR (Dees *et al.*, 2010) and Formula 1 racing (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011). However, largely overlooked within literature are critical sectors of our sporting community, such as inclusive sporting initiatives targeted at PWD. Notable exceptions to this have included Simmons and Becker-Olsen (2006) where

congruence was studied within the context of the Special Olympics. It should also be mentioned that while Javalgi et al. (1994) did not focus on congruence per se, the research revolved around how different sponsorships (basketball, theatre or the Special Olympics) could help achieve corporate objectives through enhancing corporate image. A discussion of the various levels of congruence will now occur in order to demonstrate how both the nature and environment of a sponsorship relationship needs to be considered when evaluating optimal levels of congruence.

2.3.5.1. Benefits of High Congruence

Motivations to enter, or continue, a sponsorship relationship may be driven by the benefits received when a higher level of congruence is apparent (Gwinner, 1997; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Speed & Thompson, 2000). In a situation where there is high congruence between the sponsor and sponsee, either through natural or artificial congruence, a more seamless acceptance of altruistic sponsorship motives occurs due to attribution theory and the discounting principle (Rifon *et al.*, 2004). Additionally, a greater transfer of **image** and emotions from the sponsee to the sponsor occurs as a result of stimulus generalisation and a desire for cognitive consistency (Martensen *et al.*, 2007; Rifon *et al.*, 2004; Simmons & Becker-Olson, 2006). Cognitive consistency is built around common associations (Johar & Pham, 1999) and the greater ease of remembering congruent information compared to incongruent information (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955; Simmons & Becker-Olson, 2006; Stipp & Schiavone, 1996). These associations are based upon the strength of connective associative links with strength developed naturally or through articulated connective logic (Cornwell *et al.*, 2006; Rodgers 2003). A key driver of the sponsorship relationship is ultimately to influence purchase behaviour through increasing image and awareness (Dolphin, 2003). Findings from the literature demonstrated that high congruence could help facilitate enhanced image and awareness (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). However, high congruence may not necessarily be present in all sponsor-property relationships and thus methods to improve the level of congruence need to be considered. Moreover, high congruence may not always be optimal due to the complexity of sponsorship relationship (Fleck & Quester, 2007).

2.3.5.2. *Benefits of Creating 'Artificial' Congruence*

Sponsorships that exhibit low natural congruence have been shown to benefit from effective communications to overcome low congruence perceptions (Dardis, 2009; Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006). As a result, artificial congruence has been created and can improve congruence perceptions by more than 30% when compared with poor congruence articulations (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011). This is critical to sponsorship managers who find themselves in low natural congruence situations as they must try and ensure that congruence articulations are effective (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006) and thus avoid poor congruence articulations that make the situation worse compared to non-action (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011). However, it has also been found that only positive articulation affects congruence perceptions (Cornwell *et al.*, 2006, Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006; Weeks, Cornwell, & Drennan, 2008). Hence, an ineffectual communication would not result in catastrophic consequences for the sponsorship relationship. As such, the inconsistencies in findings suggest that each sponsorship relationship is unique and should be treated accordingly.

Additionally, levels of congruence have usually been tested where associations revolve around 'success' and 'prestige' (Seguin *et al.*, 2008; Soderman & Dolles, 2008). To the present study's author's knowledge there has only been one study that found congruence could be improved through effective communications within a disability context, specifically the Special Olympics (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006). Whilst the congruence construct had high reliability (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011), the Special Olympics are not necessarily associated with images of wheelchairs as strongly as disability contexts incorporating the Paralympics (Woolcott Research, 2010). Hence, an opportunity exists to examine congruence articulation communications within contextually different sponsorship-property relationships.

2.3.5.3. *A Role for Incongruence?*

The notion that congruence "gives rise to valuations of familiarity, acceptability and a basic sense of liking" (Mandler, 1982 p. 3) and thus predictability, could mean the sponsor-property relationship is less interesting, thereby resulting in less cognitive processing. As such, Fleck and Quester (2007) argued that mild or

moderate incongruence could be beneficial, provided it is interesting. Fleck and Quester (2007) developed this line of reasoning by highlighting that incongruence results in deeper processing of the association in order to ascribe meaning to a given situation. Specifically, a greater number of inferences within a schema structure have been generated and hence produce higher recognition accuracy (Jagre, Watson, & Watson, 2001). An analogy to describe this would be trying to solve a jigsaw puzzle - while it is initially not apparent how the pieces fit together, once the task has been brought to attention and accomplished, the experience has been rewarding and valuable (Cornwell, 2008). For example, the sponsorship of the Moonlight Music Festival by Heinz Food Company appears to be incongruent. However, when it is articulated that the same young people attracted to the festival are those who opt for easy-to-prepare foods, the incongruence is resolved and provides value (Cornwell *et al.*, 2006). Consequently, mild incongruence can result in high sponsor recognition and recall accuracy, as well as more positive attitudes due to increased attention or elaboration (Jagre, Watson, & Watson, 2001; Olson & Thjømøe, 2009).

The preceding discussion has illustrated a lack of consensus as to whether congruence or incongruence, or specific dimensions, are most beneficial and relevant for sponsorship relationships. Moreover, scholars have clearly flagged a need to externally validate congruence with the potential of discovering additional dimensions. Clearly, this demonstrates the dynamic nature displayed within sponsorship relationships and the merit of further research in this “greatly neglected academic area” (Dolphin, 2003, p. 173). In this light, the provision is made for further investigations into the congruence construct across different sponsorship contexts. Further contextualising the current thesis are additional inhibitors of congruence related specifically to the sponsorship medium.

2.3.6. Specific Inhibitors of Congruence within Sport Sponsorship

Demonstrated throughout the literature review has been how theories, principles, dimensions, and levels of congruence can play an interchangeable role, either inhibiting or facilitating a sponsorship relationship. However, additional inhibitors exist due the environment in which sponsorship operates.

The nature of sponsorship entails two specific characteristics that need to be taken into account when evaluating effectiveness (Fleck & Quester, 2007). These relate to peripheral processing and message articulation (or lack thereof). Peripheral

processing highlights that consumers are attending the sport event rather than having a specific desire to allocate attention to the sponsorship message per se. Thereby, the risk involved for sponsors is that of only triggering superficial processing, or worse, going completely unnoticed (Janiszewski, 1993; Petty, Caccioppo, & Schumann, 1983). Secondly, message articulation refers to how sponsorship messages are usually non-verbal, implicit or consist of the desired association with the event itself (Hastings, 1984; Tripodi, Hirons, Bednall, & Sutherland, 2003). If congruence has not been employed correctly via articulation messages not only can this result in consumer frustration (d'Astous & Bitz, 1995) but can also be more detrimental than saying nothing (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011). However, not all research confirms the importance of congruence in articulation messages, and subsequently leveraging activities (Cliffe & Motion, 2005). As such, these inhibitors demonstrate the role congruence can play in the implementation phase of the sponsorship management framework and thus need to be addressed by managers during this time.

Further inhibitors of congruence exist within the sponsor-property relationship. The study by Farrelly et al. (2006) explored the perceived changes in sponsorship relationships overtime, highlighting that incongruent commitment levels can spawn disharmony between the sponsor and sponsee. Problems arose if one party in the relationship made an attempt to adapt to the constantly evolving sponsorship arena in terms of investment in time and resources. When a lack of reciprocity was displayed, and asymmetry between the dyadic partners was generated, serious relationship problems became apparent with eventual sponsorship dissolution (Farrelly, 2010). This research threw the spotlight on how a sponsorship relationship can be a double-edged sword, not only inhibiting congruence but in some cases terminating the relationship (Farrelly, 2010; Farrelly *et al.*, 2006). Subsequently, Farrelly et al. (2006) implied that the role of congruence within a sponsorship relationship changes during the course of a sponsorship relationship and requires certain characteristics to aid in facilitating symmetry. The importance of commitment, combined with clearly articulated requirements and expectations from the dyadic sponsorship relationship, help ensure agreed upon obligations are met and maximised (Farrelly, 2010; Farrelly *et al.*, 2006). Consequently, both parties are on the same page and thereby congruent with one another.

The previous section on congruence has clearly established the significant role it plays in sponsorship relationships as well as created a sound understanding of the

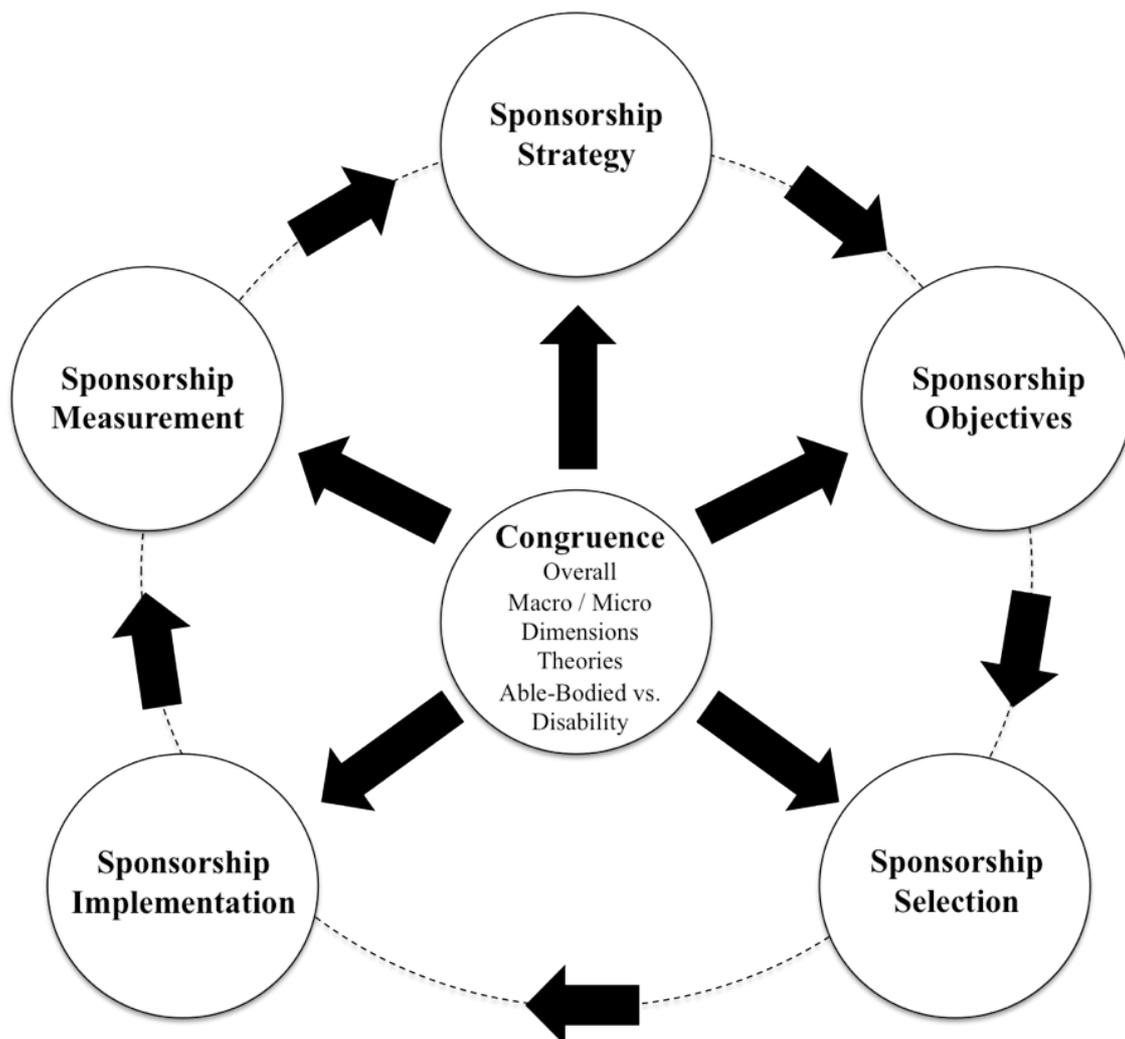
construct. As a result, a conceptual framework that incorporates key concepts identified in the literature review thereby addressing RQ1 and RQ2 will now be provided.

2.4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The development of a conceptual framework through the literature provides the necessary links between the congruence construct and the management of disability sport sponsorship relationships. As a consequence, the framework enables exploration into both research questions and is presented in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Framework for Congruence in Disability Sponsorship Relationships

Adapted from Arthur et al., (1998); Cornwell (1995); Lund (2010); Karg (2007); Lynch and Schuller (1994); Olson and Thjømøe (2011); Zdravkovic et al. (2010)



A key aim of this study has been to develop insight into the perceptions and practices of sponsors who are currently in a disability sport sponsorship agreement. As a result, the conceptual framework provides a necessary tool for which to extend current understanding of congruence into disability sport sponsorship. Moreover, Figure 2.2 simultaneously facilitates operationisation of the construct across the sport management framework. Given the intentions of this research, sub-research questions were developed to guide the overarching research questions and have also been incorporated into the conceptual framework.

RQ1- WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CONGRUENCE IN DISABILITY SPORT SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIPS?

- Is congruence perceived to exist and play a role in these relationships?
- Is congruence perceived as an overall, macro or micro-dimensional concept?
- Are the known dimensions of congruence applicable within this context;
- Are there additional dimensions that have not been identified?

RQ2 – WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CONGRUENCE IN DISABILITY SPORT SPONSORSHIP MANAGEMENT?

- What is the perceived role of congruence in sponsorship strategy?
- What is the perceived role of congruence in sponsorship objectives?
- What is the perceived role of congruence in sponsorship selection?
- What is the perceived role of congruence in sponsorship implementation?
- What is the perceived role of congruence in sponsorship measurement?

2.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter two has provided a review of literature relevant to the research area of interest. An introduction to sponsorship through the CCI continuum facilitated discussions on existing frameworks used to manage sponsorship relationships. Identification of congruence as a construct applicable to sponsorship saw a detailed investigation into dimensions, differing levels and benefits of congruence. As such, the presentation of a conceptual framework based on the literature incorporated both overarching and sub-research questions. Given the exploratory nature of the research questions, chapter three details the necessary tools and techniques needed to discuss research findings, which are presented in chapter four.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of chapter three is to discuss and justify the research methodology utilised throughout this thesis. As a result of the exploratory research questions developed through the literature review, the applicability of a qualitative case study research design is identified through six sections. Section one highlights the relevance of a qualitative case study whereas section two demonstrates how purposive sampling enabled participant selection and data collection methods. Subsequently, a focus is placed upon the data collection techniques of semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and short ranking tools. The chapter concludes with the analysis procedures employed for this thesis, delimitations, and ethical considerations.

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1.1. Nature of the Study

The nature of qualitative research enables exploration into contexts where little is known (Smith & Stewart, 2001; Zaltman, LeMasters, & Heffring, 1982) and assists in clarifying ambiguous problems. As such, qualitative research can help to create an understanding of a problem's dimensions (Zickmund, 2003). Moreover, there has recently been "important strides made on the qualitative frontier" (Bansal & Corley, 2011, p. 233), which has resulted in qualitative research methodologies gain prominence in the sport sponsorship context (e.g., Farrelly, 2010; Farrelly *et al.*, 2006; Olkkonen & Tuominen, 2006; Ryan & Blois, 2010; Turner *et al.*, 2010).

However, research that has investigated congruence across sport sponsorship domains has employed either exclusively quantitative inquiries (e.g. Gwinner & Bennett, 2008; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009; Rifon *et al.*, 2004; Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006) or a mixed-method approach (e.g. Fleck & Quester, 2007; Olson & Thjømøe, 2011; Richelieu & Lopez, 2008; Speed & Thompson, 2000; Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010). While minimal qualitative research exists in relation to congruence within sport sponsorship, the appropriateness of a qualitative inquiry becomes evident given the strengths of qualitative research and the exploratory nature of the research questions. Moreover, the value provided through investigating existing dimensions, with the potential of validating or adding to the current body of knowledge, would further clarify the ambiguous and limited

understanding of the congruence construct across the unexamined disability sport sponsorship domain. Therefore, the adoption of exploratory qualitative research formed the foundation for the case study research methodology used in this thesis.

3.1.2. A Case Study Approach

The case study approach has been widely used in both management and marketing contexts (Gummesson, 2000; Scapens, 1990), and in the broader social science discipline (Hartley, 1994). Moreover, it has been argued that within and beyond the field of marketing, case studies are necessary for theory development (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Gummesson, 2007; Yin, 2009). Contention surrounding case study research exists within the literature and whether case study research is a methodology (Creswell, 2007; Hartley, 1994), a strategy of inquiry, a comprehensive research strategy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009) or a choice of what is to be studied (Stake, 2005). However, as past research within the sponsorship discipline has viewed case study research as a methodology (Ryan & Blois, 2010), this thesis adopted a similar approach.

Case study research is an appropriate methodology to refute, or extend, existing concepts given an associated observational richness (Stuart, McCutcheon, Handfield, McLachlin & Samson, 2002). Moreover, Hartley (1994) has highlighted how case studies are ‘tailor-made’ for exploring behaviours or processes in contexts that are little understood. Hartley (1994) went on and suggested case studies can be employed when the purpose is to explore “not typicality but unusualness... with the intention of illuminating process(es)” (p. 213). As such, a case study methodology is appropriate to explore and extend theoretical concepts (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2009), and specifically related to the research questions guiding this thesis.

Creswell (2007) captured the essence of case study research succinctly when defining case study research as “the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system” (p. 73). Hartley (1994) extended this definition by proposing case study research is of interest precisely because it revolves around its unique context and allows for realisation of particularisation (Gummesson, 2000). Found within the case study approach are different types of case studies (e.g., intrinsic, instrumental and collective; Creswell, 2007). Instrumental case studies are distinguishable in terms of their intent; the researcher concentrates on a problem or concern, and then decides on one bounded case to illustrate the issue (Stake, 1995;

Yin, 2009). As demonstrated during the literature review, research related to the congruence construct is limited to classic sport domains and has not seen external validation of existing dimensions. In this light, an instrumental case study approach was fitting as it permitted an exploration into the theoretical congruence concept bounded by an Australian disability sport sponsorship context. Further detailed discussions on how the case was bound occur in the first section of chapter four.

Additionally, the case study incorporated a number of different data sources (Yin, 2009), such as interviews, documents, social media, and ranking tools. The multiple data sources simultaneously permitted several levels of analysis within the disability sport sponsorship case study (Eisenhardt, 1989) and shall be focused upon in subsequent sections. As a result of the numerous data origins, a richer understanding of organisational phenomena (Geertz, 1973) was achieved. Moreover, the unequal ratio of variables-to-observations (Gummesson, 2007) made the application of quantitative analysis questionable when considering the continuous ebb and flow of organisational activities (Hartley, 1994) conducted by sponsors. Consequently, the suitability of employing a case study research approach becomes apparent from the previous discussion. Playing a critical role in the case study was selection and recruitment of participants, which will now be discussed.

3.2. SAMPLING

3.2.1. Sampling Method

The sampling method employed was ‘purposive sampling’ as it helped to ensure relevant participant selection (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling provided the researcher with the ability to select individuals, organisations, and locations for the study given that those selected purposefully informed an understanding, and created insights, into the research questions (Berg, 2001; Creswell, 2007). The importance of devising categories and parameters helped to make certain those being interviewed provided a meaningful contribution (Stroh, 2000) and different perspectives were gained (Amis, 2005). Naturally, the sampling category was organisations involved in a disability sport sponsorship relationship but was not limited to one specific type of relationship. However, the geographic parameter saw the sample purposefully restricted to Australian disability sport sponsorship relationships given the honours

time frame and main data collection technique (see Section 3.3.). Hence, using purposive sampling, the sample frame was able to be determined.

3.2.2. Sample Frame

Smith and Stewart (2001) have suggested a small sample frame is appropriate given a qualitative nature of inquiry, with McCracken's (1988) statement, "less is more" adding further confirmation (p. 17). Additional reinforcement for a small sample size is found in qualitative sport sponsorship research where participant figures have ranged from seven (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004) to twelve (Olson & Thjømøe, 2011). Similarly, past literature that has adopted a case study approach demonstrated the number of participants was based on attempts to speak to key personnel involved in sponsorship relationships and their ability to contribute different perspectives to the case (Lund, 2010; Ryan & Blois, 2010). In this light, the sample frame saw sponsors from fourteen different Australian disability sport sponsorship relationships invited to participate in the research. This number was in alignment with the CCI continuum and a desire to incorporate organisational, individual, product, financial, and service sponsorship relationships. As a result, the small number of interviews resulted in working closely with fewer people, as opposed to spending less time with many, and thereby facilitated a rich and detailed exploration of the case study (Denscombe, 1998; McCracken, 1988).

The above approach of seeking highly knowledgeable participants is in line with literature (Farrelly *et al.*, 2006) as value creation was simultaneously achieved through diverse perspectives and incorporated participants who are key decision makers in their respective organisations (Dexter, 1970). This strategy was designed with the intention of producing an understanding of relevant information (Drumwright, 1996) such as viewpoints regarding management of disability sport sponsorship relationships. Moreover, the range of viewpoints helped to limit bias (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) when analysing the data. Bias was also minimised through time constraints that ensured the researcher did not become immersed in data collection over an extended period of time (Lund, 2010). Nevertheless, it was hoped that through participants' collective experiences, a dynamic picture was painted to capture the role congruence has played in respective sponsorship arrangements.

As a result of the sampling approach, viewpoints from important societal actors facilitated the production of knowledge from different perspectives found in

disability sport sponsorship relationships. The different perspectives were achieved through multiple data collection methods and will now be focused upon.

3.3. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

It is recognised that in order to align with the case study methodology, multiple perspectives and data sources need to be obtained (Creswell, 2007; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2009). Accordingly, different types of disability sport sponsorship relationships were chosen for analysis. Forming the backbone that elucidated these views were semi-structured interviews. Alongside the individual interviews, data was drawn from other sources such as documents (for example, annual reports, press releases, company data etc) and a brief quantitative ranking tool integrated into the interview. The inclusion of the short ranking tool was deemed to be useful as it generated further evidence to triangulate the data without jeopardising the underlying qualitative nature of the study (Gummesson, 2007). Discussions will now focus on data collection methods to demonstrate how this thesis created data validity.

3.3.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Patton (1990) suggested, “interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (p. 278) and thus was an appropriate methodological vehicle to generate rich data (Amis, 2005; Murray & Sixsmith, 1998). In-depth interviews allowed for detailed and frank discussions (Alam, 2005; Amis, 2005). Further, the semi-structured interview technique allowed participants to influence the interview structure (Barriball & While, 1994) and offered a higher degree of self-expression compared to structured interviews (Murray & Sixsmith, 1998) where the wording and question sequence does not vary (Wengraf, 2001). Given the research questions framing this thesis and the unique context in which they were explored, semi-structured interviews provided a suitable method for achieving the research aims.

Furthermore, literature has proposed semi-structured interviews are employed when the study is concerned with “exploring... experiences, thoughts and feelings” (Murray & Sixsmith, 1998, p. 105) centering on predetermined themes (Andrews, Mason, & Silk, 2005). This point is confirmed by Amis (2005) who stated that the detailed exploration afforded by interviews is “not possible with other forms of data

collection” (p. 105). Other benefits of semi-structured interviews included an ability to vary the question order and a capacity to insert additional exploratory questions (Amis, 2005). Moreover, the nature of the semi-structured interview enabled the interviewer to adapt the language of the questions to suit the participant as well as incorporate key themes into subsequent interviews as they emerged (for example, Amis, 2005; Farrelly, 2010; Shaw & Amis, 2001); a method known as the reiterative approach (Remenyi & Williams, 1998). Consequently, the exploratory nature of semi-structured interviews made them an appropriate tool for this study and was used as the main data collection technique to uncover information not usually generated through quantitative methods (Smith & Stewart, 2001).

Additionally, semi-structured interviews, within the specific sponsor-property relationship context, were seen to be advantageous over other qualitative data collection methods, such as focus groups, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the increasing trend of research to focus on strategic decision-making (such as the case in sponsorship objectives; Dolphin, 2003) has seen the suggestion that interviews become the primary data source (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Associated explanations for this trend have included an efficiency to gather rich data combined with control over confidentiality (Amis, 2005). The promise of anonymity (in terms of name, firm, and pseudonyms during data coding) was considered particularly pertinent to this thesis due to the context framing the research questions. Given anonymity, literature has highlighted how interviews present an opportunity for participants to express opinions that do not necessarily conform to what could be considered the norm (Stokes & Bergin, 2006) and thereby provides less socially desirable answers (Patton, 2002). Moreover, interviews allowed for exploration of participants’ opinions regarding sensitive issues and enabled probing if more information was required (Barriball & While, 1994). This is in contrast to a focus group situation where participants could be more inclined to create a politically correct viewpoint when in fact other sponsorship beliefs are held. Consequently, it was hoped that the interview environment created a setting where participants felt comfortable to express their honest opinions, thus producing valid responses to capture the construct of congruence.

The interview method has been shown to give participants a feeling of empowerment as well as create situations where strong levels of rapport and trust can be built (Stokes & Bergin, 2006). Hence, not only can this improve the quality of the

data collected (Stokes & Bergin, 2006) but it can also potentially overcome the issue of bias, particularly when the topic of discussion revolves around sponsorship and a disability sport property. Lastly, in an attempt to recognise the extreme value of time for the participants within the study, individual interviewing provided the most appropriate method of obtaining rich data while still offering flexibility for both parties involved (Amis, 2005). Given the pivotal role of both the interview guide and protocol in ensuring consistency and minimisation of time wastage across individual interviews, a discussion outlining both these components will now ensue.

3.3.2. Interview Protocol and the Interview Guide

An interview protocol allowed for a consistent analytical pathway to be followed after interview data had been collected (Alam, 2005) as well as improved the reliability of this qualitative study (Yin, 2009). It is recognised that the design of an interview must be suitable for the particular study as the various research methods incorporate different styles and purposes (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995). In light of this, an interview protocol was developed with the support of several academics, who have substantial expertise in the sport marketing discipline, in conjunction with supporting literature. Found within the interview protocol were respondent details, the interview schedule, a plain language statement (PLS), a participant consent form, a revocation of consent form, the three short ranking tools, several semi-structured questions used to guide the interviews, and a blank pro-forma to aid the researcher note responses from participants.

Similarly to the interview protocol, the interview guide was drawn from relevant literature but was also based upon the research questions for this thesis (see Appendix B). The interview guide was flexible in nature, both during and across interviews, and hence permitted modification and variation throughout individual interviews. This was not viewed as an inhibitor to the research, rather, as evidence of the qualitative inquiry design (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1995). As such, the interviews began with structured questions such as how long the participant had been involved in their current role, in line with previous literature (Patton, 2002). This was followed with broader questions (e.g., can you please tell me about the sponsorship culture at your organisation) to establish rapport, which thus enabled the participant to feel comfortable. Consequently, discussions then began to focus on specific issues that required a delicate touch. This is known as the funneling approach

and is commonly used in qualitative exploratory research (Minichiello *et al.*, 1995). While the initial few questions remained constant across interviews to allow for comparable data, the nature of semi-structured interviews allowed for open discussion of emerging themes and the use of probing questions (as probing questions allow for eliciting information more completely compared to the original question). Additionally, the same researcher conducted all the interviews to ensure key themes were addressed but also allowed for questions to be expressed in the participant's language. As a result, these techniques allowed for comparable data and emerging themes to be incorporated into individual, and subsequent, interviews.

3.3.3. Pilot Study

Before commencement of interviewing participants from disability sport sponsorship relationships, pilot testing of the research instrument occurred. Pilot studies are recommended as they provide the researcher with the opportunity to review and revise a research instrument and interview guide (Eisenhardt, 1989; Parkhe, 1993; Minichiello *et al.*, 1995). Moreover, pilot studies enable testing of the interview protocol (Alam, 2005). As such, a pilot study is akin to a full “dress rehearsal” where the refinement of relevant questions and corrections can be made (Yin, 1994, p. 74). In an attempt to simulate the semi-structured interview environment, a pilot study was conducted with the marketing manager at a state-level sporting institute. The interview guide, developed with academic staff and relevant literature, was utilised and enabled a prominent theme regarding **culture** as a dimension of congruence to be incorporated into the third ranking tool during data collection.

3.3.4. Recruitment

Following the purposeful sampling technique, initial contact was made with participants. An email invitation was sent to fourteen sponsors of disability sporting sponsees. Attached to the email was an introduction from the researcher concerning the purpose of the research as well as reiteration to participate in the study (see Appendix C). Pertinently, the matter of confidentiality was assured along with the desire to produce high quality research achievable through recruitment of expert opinions. While no financial incentives were offered, an invitation to receive a copy of the research findings was also provided in the introductory letter. This approach is

supported by Alam (2005), who suggested that a benefit of participating in qualitative interviews is the research generated. Subsequent to this delivery, a follow-up phone-call or email after approximately one week occurred with the objective of providing more detail and arranging a prospective meeting date and time.

3.3.5. Interviews

Interviews formed the major form of data collection for the case studies. Of the fourteen organisations approached, ten agreed to participate in the study. The participants had a range of titles, some of which included marketing manager, director, or sponsorship manager. While differences in titles existed, there was no doubt of participants' responsibility and authority over their respective sponsorship relationships. Moreover, a holistic view of Australian disability sport sponsorship relationships was created with six relationships between a sponsor and individual and the remaining business-to-business sponsorship relationships. Further, there were a total of six financial, two product, one service, and one mixed sponsorship relationship. Depth of findings was achieved through interviewing both current and recently dissolved sponsorship as well as incorporated sponsorship durations from a few weeks to eight years. The sponsors included a variety of small to large organisations (ABS, 2002), and saw Melbourne and Sydney Head Office locations. Also, industries that participants represented included communication services, manufacturing, retail trade, finance and insurance, transport and storage, and accommodation, cafes and restaurants (ABS, 1998). Appendix D provides further detail through individual sponsorship profiles of sponsors involved in the study.

To the best of the researcher's ability, the interviews took place at an agreed upon location and time that was convenient for the participant and thereby saw the researcher conduct interviews in both Sydney and Melbourne. The ten interviews lasted between 45 to 90 minutes. Prior to each interview, participants were provided with a PLS containing details of the research (such as an introduction to the study, objectives, benefits of the research and ethical considerations; see Appendix E). Upon agreement to participate in the study, participants were asked to sign and return a consent form and were provided with both a copy for their personal records as well as a revocation of consent form (Appendix F). With the permission of the participant, interviews were recorded and notes were taken with comments placed onto a prepared pro forma categorised into key themes (see Appendix G). Field notes were also taken

soon after each interview to capture any additional thoughts and potential ideas for subsequent interviews.

During the interviews, three brief ranking tools were administered in order to produce additional comparative data and triangulate the study. Participants were asked to rank the importance of different generic sponsorship motives, objectives as well as dimensions of congruence thereby reinforcing qualitative findings. Similarly, a word-association tool was completed during the interviews to substantiate unprompted qualitative findings. The word association tool saw participants ascribe five words to their organisation along with their associated reasoning. Subsequently, participants were asked to repeat this process for the sponsee. Interviews were transcribed verbatim into MS Word documents with clarification being sought on occasion with participants. These transcripts were complemented through the multiple sources of other data collected throughout the study.

3.3.6. Documentation and Ranking Tool

While interviews have formed the foundation of many studies where sport sponsorship decision-making has been explored (Amis, Pant, & Slack, 1997; Amis *et al.*, 1999; Shaw & Amis, 2001), other forms of documentation are needed when a case study approach is adopted (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009). This aids in triangulation of the research and is considered a strength of the methodology (Alam, 2005). Although triangulation of evidence occurred through collecting data from multiple key participants (i.e., different types of sponsorship relationships), additional sources of data collection facilitated understanding of the research questions. Documents such as annual reports, mission statements, internal organisational information, previous research conducted by the disability sporting bodies, media releases and other relevant sources all formed a part of this thesis. However, when document analysis is presented alongside findings from participants, the documents have been de-identified in order to preserve and respect participant confidentiality.

Furthering the pre-requisite of multiple data sources for a case study (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009) is the espoused suggestion that both quantitative and qualitative approaches can be used to develop a case study (Yin, 2009). As such, three short ranking tools supported the main qualitative data collection technique and included motivators, objectives and congruence micro-dimensions of sponsorship relationships. Copies and origins of tools can be found in Appendix H, Appendix I,

and Appendix J. Item generation for the tools was based upon existing literature and saw participants allocate a score on a scale of one to seven, with seven indicating strong agreement, in line with previous research (Irwin, Asimakopoulos, & Sutton, 1994). Opportunities for participants to include additional items not found on the short ranking tools were provided to capture specific relationships nuances. It is acknowledged that the sample size is not sufficient to allow findings to be generalised to the population (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). However, the tool enabled comparison across two main areas. Firstly, the ranking tool enabled organisational (O) sponsorships (i.e., corporate business-to-sport organisation) to be compared with those of individual (I) sponsorship relationships (i.e., corporate business-to-athlete). Secondly, it allowed for trend identification and contrast across the different sponsorship types (i.e. financial (F), service (S) and product (P)).

The rationale behind multiple data sources lay in the increased accuracy of research conclusions (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2009) and minimising participant bias (Eisenhardt, 1989; Patton, 2002). Essentially, reliance on further data sources enabled crosschecking, any contradictory or inconsistent findings to be resolved (Alam, 2005), and common patterns to be discovered in an unobtrusive manner (Babbie, 1999). Moreover, time was not wasted on fact finding during the interviews as the multiple data sources provided assistance in developing the interview guide (Cepeda & Martin, 2005; Meyer, 2001). Lastly, document analysis allowed for a holistic picture to be painted and capture where sponsor-property relationships have come from, where they are now, and what future plans are perceived to be.

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

According to Patton (1990), “data interpretation and analysis involves making sense out of what people have said, looking for patterns, putting together what is said in one place with what is said in another place, and integrating what different people have said” (p. 347). Patton’s (1990) statement highlighted the core elements of qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2007). More formally, the stages of qualitative analysis initiated with reducing data through open coding and summaries (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This stage started in conjunction with data collection and was an ongoing process (Gratton & Jones, 2010). As such, it permitted an appreciation of themes to be developed and allowed for modifications of the interview guide (Amis,

2005). It was at this point that the software program 'NVivo' was utilised as a data management tool and saw the development of three broad initial codes, as highlighted in as highlighted in Appendix K. The second stage involved data display and combining the data into themes (e.g. tables, charts, diagrams; Creswell, 2007) and resulted in 16 secondary codes (see Appendix K).

Lastly, conclusions, verifications, and comparisons were made (Miles & Huberman, 1994). While the stages of qualitative data analysis can be viewed as the foundation for which subsequent research methodologies can be built, Creswell (2007) suggested that data analysis should not be viewed as "off the shelf; rather it is custom built [and] revised" (p. 150). Indeed, the process of data collection, data analysis, and report writing were all intertwined and occurred simultaneously within the research project.

3.4.1. Data Analysis for the Case Study

Building from the foundations of qualitative analysis, the adoption of Wolcott's (1994) traditional approach to case study data analysis was employed for this thesis. Case study analysis commenced with highlighting certain information in a descriptive manner. Patterns were identified and contextualised in the conceptual framework developed from the literature. Findings were then displayed in different formats (e.g. charts, tables, diagrams) in order to enable comparisons.

Wolcott's (1994) traditional approach was supplemented with suggestions made by Creswell (2007). Specifically, in order to describe the case and context, not only did data need to be managed through the creation and organisation of files but the text needed to be read in its entirety, enhanced through margin notes. Indeed, the initial readings of transcripts saw the researcher go beyond predetermined questions so participants could be 'heard' (Asmussen & Creswell, 1995). As Creswell (2007) emphasised the importance and applicability of establishing the case study setting, this was included at the beginning of chapter four.

Subsequent to the case description, initial codes were formed to begin categorical classification that saw the development of themes and patterns. Of note is that themes or patterns originated from multiple sources and were achieved through a variety of approaches (Creswell, 2007). For example, themes were derived from research questions, the research instrument, *a priori* research, and the data (Stroh, 2000). Similarly, both an inductive (direction achieved from the data; Ryan & Blois,

2010) and deductive (using theory and extant literature to inspect the case; Ryan & Blois, 2010) approach was used to develop themes and patterns (Creswell, 2007; Denis, Lamothe, & Langley, 2001). A benefit of this approach was the creation of insights from the data without “necessarily denying or reinventing concepts” that have come before (Denis, *et al.*, 2001, p. 812). This approach is known as ‘systematic combing’ where reality is ‘matched’ with theory during the research process (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Both Wolcott’s (1994) final stages of contextualisation and display of findings is akin to Creswell’s (2007) interpretation and visualisation stages.

In addition to both Wolcott’s (1994) and Creswell’s (2007) case study data analysis techniques were four complementary forms of data analysis techniques. The first form was ‘categorical aggregation’, a technique where instances were collected from the data with the desire of discovering issue-relevant meanings (Stake, 1995). Illuminating the opposite perspective was the ‘direct interpretation’ technique (Stake, 1995). Direct interpretation saw the examination of a single example, with meaning extracted from it without confirmation from other examples (Stake, 1995). An analogy used to describe this process is pulling it apart and putting it back together in a way that provides meaning; in essence, order out of meaningful chaos was created. Only after this task was accomplished were patterns explored (Stake, 1995). Lastly, naturalistic generalisations, as a result of the data analysis, enabled learning to occur from the specific case (Stake, 1995).

Various perspectives exist in relation to when data analysis is complete. Lincoln & Guba (1985) proposed data analysis should end when data ‘saturation’ has been reached; when no new themes, linkages or relationships emerge. However, Amis (2005) recommended a more practical suggestion where time and resources dictate the end of data analysis. This can be expressed as, “we know that our analysis is not finished, only over” (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 120). While time and resource constraints did influence the research process, the combination of data analysis tools and techniques saw a thorough examination of the data. As a result, the point of data saturation was viewed as being accomplished.

3.4.2. Data Analysis Validity

This thesis sought to ensure trustworthy and valid findings within the given predetermined timeframe. This was achieved through principles suggested by Holloway and Wheeler (2009). Firstly, member validation enabled the researcher to

confer with participants about any ambiguities discovered during data analysis. Secondly, in order to minimise confirmation bias, both contradictory (negative cases and alternative explanations) and confirmatory themes were explored (Amis, 2005; Gephart, 2004; Holloway & Wheeler, 2009). Some academics have proposed at least three examples should be provided to support any assertions that are made through the data and any inconsistencies should be highlighted (Stake, 1995). As such, the researcher is able to link the key concepts based on methodological grounds with the broader corpus of data used in the study (Gephart, 2004). In this light, the common problem of ‘examplifying’ was mitigated and the data was presented in an analytical manner (Gephart, 2004). However, Krane, Andersen, and Streaan (1997) suggested, “in many cases, rare experiences are no less meaningful, useful or important than common ones. In some cases, the rare experience may be the most enlightening one” (p. 214). Hence, examples that were deemed to have provided unique insight into disability sport sponsorship relationships were not discounted simply because other examples could not supply confirmation. Thirdly, triangulation through multiple data collection sources combined with an audit trail (i.e. data analysis description) was employed. Fourthly, reflexivity was achieved through the researcher having an awareness of their role, how this potentially influenced the findings, and critically reflecting on their preconceptions during data analysis stages. Lastly, verisimilitude was incorporated into the findings through context creation, thus giving the reader a “sense of almost being there” (Gratton & Jones, 2010, p. 248).

3.5. DELIMITATIONS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Babbie (1999) “few social patterns are 100% consistent”, thus highlighting that it is necessary to discuss delimitations associated with the qualitative research methodology adopted in this thesis (p. 294). Given that one of the many purposes of this study was to provide useful findings for sponsors and sponsees involved in disability sport sponsorship relationships, the ambivalent image that persists among many practitioners (Burton & Patterson, 1999) and academics alike (de Ruyter & Scholl, 1998) in regard to qualitative inquiries needs to be recognised. However, it is the position of this thesis, as well as the literature (Bansal & Corley, 2011), that qualitative research has “come of age” (p. 1) and can produce valid findings through triangulation (Yin, 2009). It is also argued that the exploratory

nature of the case study necessitated the adoption of a qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2007) and was beneficial to the research findings.

A common criticism of case study research is an inability to generalise the findings (Hartley, 1994; Stake, 1995). However, Yin (1981) disputed this and claimed that case studies should be considered on par with whole experiments due to the detailed and in-depth perspectives created through multiple data collection techniques (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Creswell, 2007). While this thesis does not seek to generalise the findings, it does attempt to shed new light onto the congruence construct within the disability sport sponsor-property context, thus “elucidat[ing] the particular, the specific” (Creswell, 2007, p. 126) within a single case study.

Similarly, inclusion of the short-ranking tools was not intended to produce results applicable to the wider population, especially given the sample size (n=10). Rather, the purpose of the short ranking tools was primarily focused upon validation of qualitative findings gathered during the semi-structured interviews. Moreover, it is important to note that short ranking tool three, which related to dimensions of congruence, was conducted at the conclusion of the interview and thus did not influence or bias qualitative results.

Lastly, the contextual boundaries chosen for the case study placed have resulted in the ‘social research’ category and thus limitations of the selected data collection method need to be established. During semi-structured interviews, participant bias could have existed as participants potentially wanted to create an image that was thoughtful and concerned to the researcher and themselves (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001). However, it was hoped that through the use of individual interviews, a location chosen by the interviewee, and the use of non-leading questions, participant bias was reduced thereby widening the research findings.

3.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Irrespective of the approach taken to qualitative inquiry, researchers face many ethical issues when spending time completing a research project (Creswell, 2007) and thus ethical issues were considered at the outset of the research project (Amis, 2005). Additionally, the inherent human interaction involved in the primary data collection method, semi-structured interviews, necessitated that the rights of participants were protected (Amis, 2005). In an effort to consider ethical issues, this thesis turned to Kent’s (2000) ‘rules’ for ethical research.

Firstly, ‘veracity’ involved the researcher telling the truth, avoiding misleading or deceiving participants, and reporting results truthfully (Kent, 2000). All participants were provided with a PLS and consent form (see Appendix E and Appendix F) prior to the interview. Secondly, ‘privacy’ was ensured by not placing pressure on the participant during the course of interviews (Kent, 2000). Thirdly, ‘fidelity’ was adhered to by keeping the promise of providing research findings to participants (Kent, 2000) given the invitation was accepted after the initial introductory letter. Lastly, and of critical importance, is ‘confidentiality’ (Kent, 2000). Within the PLS, consent form, and initial introductory letter, participants were assured that their confidentiality was protected, that they would remain anonymous, and that pseudonyms would be used during data coding and analysis. As a result, names of organisations, participants, sponsees, and specific sports, were not mentioned throughout the current thesis.

A requirement, and strength, of this thesis was the acquirement of Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee approval thereby ensuring the study followed the ethics procedures and protocols outlined by Deakin University. As a result of ethics protocols, all recordings, transcripts and other data collected, will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the supervisors room for a minimum of six years once the project has been completed. Should the supervisors leave Deakin University within this time frame, the responsibility of storing the research data falls to the head of the School of Management and Marketing at Deakin University.

3.7. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter three has highlighted the persuasive power and suitable advantages of a case study methodology. As such, a case study was used to explore the role of congruence within the bounded disability sport sponsorship context. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews with sponsorship decision-makers taken from a sponsor perspective. Complementing the semi-structured interviews was the collection of data from multiple sources, such as documents and a brief ranking tool, in order to achieve triangulation and case validity. Data analysis was accomplished via data reduction, data display and combining the data into themes, and concluded with data verifications and comparisons.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter four presents findings from data analysis processes followed by relevant discussions. Following an initial discussion on disability sport sponsorship relationships to create the context, this chapter is divided into two main sections in alignment with each of the overarching research questions. When findings are described, quotes and figures are used to provide examples. Tables have been utilised if more than two quotes are employed, to highlight specific research findings, for short ranking tool results, and as a quick reference guide for abbreviations.

4.1. DISABILITY SPORT SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIPS

In accordance with case study methodology, it is initially necessary to create an in-depth understanding of the case under exploration (Creswell, 2007). Given the details and profiles of sponsors found in both chapter and Appendix DD discussions commence with sponsors reinforcing the definition of sponsorship. Firstly however, a guide to abbreviations utilised throughout this chapter is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Abbreviations for Sponsorship Relationships

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Term</i>
F	Financial
I	Individual
O	Organisational
P	Product
S	Service

4.1.1. Exchange Nature of Sponsorship Relationships

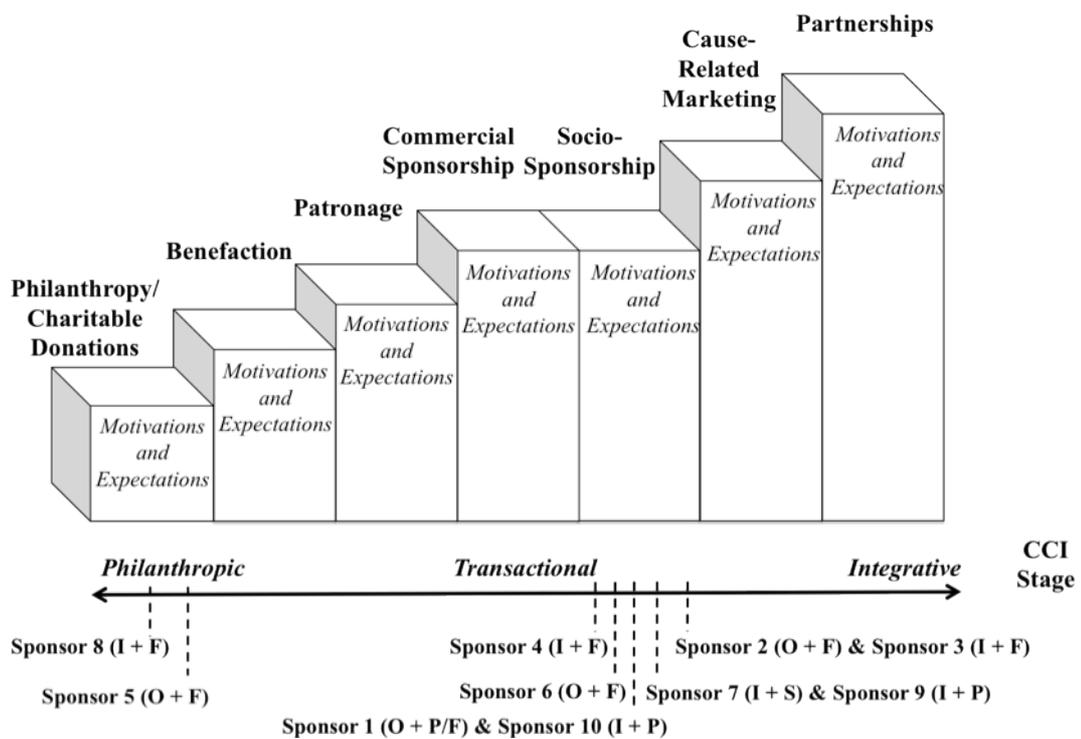
In line with established definitions, disability sport sponsorship relationships strongly emphasised the exchange nature of sponsorship. Sponsor 1 (O + P/F) noted that the sponsorship provided “benefits for the sponsee and sponsor” and was confirmed by other sponsors who viewed mutual obligations resulting in a benefit exchange. For example, sponsees would receive product and in return be expected to actively promote the product of the sponsor. As such, participants provided corroboration for Meenaghan’s (1991) exchange-based definition of the marketing communications technique.

4.1.2. Classification of Disability Sport Sponsorship Relationships

Further context creation was achieved through placing each sponsorship relationship along Austin’s (2000) CCI continuum (see Figure 4.1). Placement along the continuum was based upon the tangible or intangible nature of sponsorship motivations and expectations as expressed by sponsors during the interviews, in line with literature definitions (Austin, 2000; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007). Reinforcement occurred through individual results of short ranking tool one and two where intangible motivators and objectives were identified by sponsors.

Figure 4.1: Placement of Sponsorship Relationships Along CCI Continuum

Adapted from Austin (2000); Seitanidi and Ryan (2007)



4.1.2.1. Philanthropic Disability Sport Sponsorship Relationships

As seen in Figure 2.1, two organisational relationships were termed sponsorships, however, participants indicated strong philanthropic roots and the donor recipient position. Consequently, these relationships align heavily with the common role played by sponsorship in the 21st century (Witcher *et al.*, 1991).

Philanthropy was clearly evident and emphasised by Sponsor 8 (I + F) who disliked receiving public recognition. As a result, Sponsor 8 “didn’t put any displays up like everybody else did” during fundraising galas where they were one of the

primary sponsors. Moreover, Sponsor 8 expressed negligible interest in leveraging sponsorship relationships, including the disability sport sponsorship, as sponsorships were based upon the of director's choice notion. As such, utilisation the highly congruent tagline, "realise your dreams" (Sponsor 8 website), was not exploited. Another financially based sponsorship within the philanthropic stage of the CCI continuum saw the sponsorship geared towards making employees "feel good, like we are giving back" (Sponsor 5, O +F). This altruistic motive and reward was considered sufficient for the sponsorship. Indeed, if Sponsor 5 got more than the "warm and fuzzy feeling" out of the sponsorship, then "that was a bonus".

4.1.2.2. Socio Disability Sport Sponsorship Relationships

In contrast to philanthropic sponsorship relationships, the warm and fuzzy terminology was used in three other sponsorship relationships to highlight relationship origins. As a result, sponsors were able to compare sponsorship beginnings to their current position where the medium was viewed as "an integral marketing tool for any marketing programme" (Sponsor 4: I + F). Consequently, the majority (eight out of ten) of sponsorship relationships could be placed into Austin's (2000) socio-sponsorship classification where expectations were orientated towards intangible rewards. Intangible rewards were strategic in nature with the intention of improving reputation, gaining "some credibility", and thereby facilitating "a seat at the table" (i.e., an ability to influence relevant people; Sponsor 6, O + F). As such, sponsorships had "benefit for the sponsor and the community" (Sponsor 1, O + P/F). This was particularly pertinent in organisations which wanted to be perceived as "equal opportunity employers" (Sponsor 4, I + F) or wished to demonstrate "in a tangible way" their "full understanding of all Australian Olympic athletes" (Sponsor 3, I + F). As a result, this "didn't just mean summer or able-bodied" but extended to, and incorporated, the Paralympics (Sponsor 3). Not all sponsors anticipated a significant reward, particularly if the product was exchanged for the sponsee "singing the sponsor's song" (Sponsor 9, I + P). Moreover, expectations included "little things that are important to [the sponsor] and usually do not cost anything" (Sponsor 2, O +F). As a result, strong expectations of intangible rewards logically saw the majority of sponsorships placed into Austin's (2000) socio-sponsorship classification.

4.1.2.3. *Commercial Elements of Disability Sport Sponsorships*

Given sponsorships have either been classified as philanthropic or socio-sponsorships, the case study did not incorporate a pure commercial sponsorship relationship. However, sponsorships did display commercial elements thereby highlighting the nature of Austin's (2000) continuum and applicability of Meenaghan's (1991) sponsorship definition. As a result, sponsors expressed expectations significantly revolved around intangible rewards but did extend to tangible rewards. For example, Sponsor 1 (O + P/F) sought advertising space in order to promote the business. This is demonstrated in the comment, "they were just blank products. Instantly we started putting 'proudly supporting sponsee' so even though the product was being used at no cost, at least it was a travelling billboard". A further example of the nature of a continuum was provided by Sponsor 4 (I + F) who stated, "we had the commercial, hard-nosed sponsorships where you make a buck... and others were there for brand awareness. Like the arts and that, we put into the bucket as CSR... The sponsee was in the commercial side". However, subsequent discussions revealed expectations were predominately targeted towards intangible rewards such as staff motivation, increased reputation and brand awareness creation. Consequently, only elements of commercial sponsorships were evident within disability sport sponsorship relationships.

Pertinently, in sponsorship relationships where commercial elements were stronger, the balance of power still favoured the sponsor, which reflected existing literature (Ryan & Fay, 2003; Simpson *et al.*, 2011). In alignment with Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004), disability sponsees relied heavily on sponsors as a source of income. Sponsor 6 (O + F) highlighted this insight in the comment, "the sponsee has been wonderful so far. I think that they need the money. They just bend over backwards for us and they are quite professional – even with limited staff".

4.1.3. Impingement Factors in Disability Sport Sponsorship Relationships

Also of contextual relevance is how sponsors saw athlete schedules, limited time, 'old-school' cultures, communication breakdowns, law reforms, as well as finances depending on economic situations, as impinging upon their relationships

with sponsees. However, only one sponsor noted how the sponsorship relationship was impacting as a result of the sponsee having a disability.

The reality is that existing interest in the Paralympics is a lot less... The penetration of the Paralympics in peoples' consciousness is fairly low compared to able-bodied... There was no point getting locked in and thinking that by associating with the Paralympics we were going to be connecting with as many people as we were through the able-bodied Olympics... There are more able-bodied people out in the world so in terms of relevance to individuals around Australia, it is a lot lower. The extremes of the active components, what can be achieved by the Paralympians in terms of how fast they can go, how high they can jump, what they have hit – all the different aspects of that are not as great as the Olympians (Sponsor 3, I + F).

As a result of previous discussions, a clear and comprehensive context has been created for the case under investigation with additional insight achieved through sponsorship relationship profiles found in Appendix D. The mixture of sponsorship relationships contained within the current study allows a diverse and holistic picture to be created of disability sport sponsorship relationships in Australia. As such, it is within this setting that the concept of congruence will now be investigated and discussed.

4.2. RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: EXPLORATION OF CONGRUENCE

As demonstrated in the literature review, the majority of research on congruence in sponsorship relationships has occurred in an able-bodied sport setting (e.g., Alexander, 2009; Richelieu & Lopez, 2008). Moreover, terminology used to describe overall congruence as well as dimensions of congruence varies greatly across papers (Fleck & Quester, 2007). The following sections focus on research question one, and related sub-questions, with the aim of exploring perceptions of congruence within disability sport sponsorship relationships as an overall, macro, and micro-dimensional construct.

4.2.1. Existence of Congruence

As congruence is the most widely studied theoretical concept relating to how a sponsorship stimulus is processed (Cornwell *et al.*, 2005; Speed & Thompson, 2000), the concept has been thoroughly explored in the context of able-bodied sponsorship relationships. In line with the exploratory case study methodology, the purpose of

this section was to determine whether congruence naturally existed and was perceived by sponsors within disability sport sponsorship relationships.

4.2.1.1. Case Study Findings: Existence of Congruence

The emergence of congruence within disability sport sponsorship relationships occurred naturally in discussions with nine out of ten participants. The unprompted surfacing of the theoretical concept saw the term ‘fit’ used by six sponsors. Other expressions such as “like-minded **principles**” and “shared **goals**” were utilised to a lesser extent with the intent of inferring the same notion. More specifically, statements such as “you always look for a good fit” (Sponsor 4: I + F), “it was a perfect fit from our perspective” (Sponsor 5: O + F), and “it was just a good fit” (Sponsor 9: I + P) leave little uncertainty as to the existence of congruence within disability sport sponsorship relationships. Sponsor 5 (O + F) highlighted congruence explicitly through the statement “there has to be a connection. I mean, you don’t go off sponsoring something if there is no connection at all.” Congruence terminology, as employed by sponsors, both in an unprompted and prompted fashion, is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Terminology Used to Infer Congruence In Sponsorship Relationships

Sponsor 1 (O + P/F)	Alignment, similarities
Sponsor 2 (O + F)	Fit, alignment, match, synergies
Sponsor 3 (I + F)	Fit, alignment, links, relatedness, relevancy
Sponsor 4 (I + F)	Fit
Sponsor 5 (O + F)	Fit, connection, similarities
Sponsor 6 (O + F)	Fit, alignment, similarities, synergies
Sponsor 7 (I + S)	Fit, alignment, synergy
Sponsor 8 (I + F)	Fit, links, match, synergies
Sponsor 9 (I + P)	Fit, alignment, connection, links
Sponsor 10 (I + P)	Fit, alignment

Sponsors professed that congruence played a role from day one with Sponsor 7 (I + S) commenting that the sponsorship relationship was not only “a good fit at the time” but “continued to be so”. Another sponsor highlighted the continual role of congruence within the relationship as over time the construct appeared to have changed in “a more positive way” (Sponsor 5: O + F). These findings indicate how the presence of congruence has spanned across sponsorship lifecycles as opposed to simply specific timeframes within relationships.

4.2.2.2. Case Study Discussion: Existence of Congruence

While congruence has been widely researched in broader fields such as management and marketing (Park *et al.*, 1991; Tauber, 1993), the recent attention on the construct in sport sponsorship (Fleck & Quester, 2007) has resulted in an examination of congruence within prominent sports (e.g., NASCAR by Dees *et al.*, 2010; AFL by Turner *et al.*, 2010). As such, the above findings extend existing contexts to demonstrate sponsors unprompted perceptions of congruence and the important role it plays in disability sport sponsorship relationships. In alignment with Fleck and Quester (2007), sponsors used a plethora of terminology to describe the concept with the intent of inferring similar meanings. Consequently, the findings complement consumer perceptions of congruence found in sponsorship relationships with the Special Olympics (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006).

Interestingly, the exception was Sponsor 8 (I +F) who through prompted discussion noted the significance of congruence but could not provide details on other links within the relationship. This suggested that the nature of congruence may differ across sponsorship relationships, particularly when the sponsorship has strong philanthropic roots. Further discussion of congruence in relation to different types of sponsorship relationships occurs later in this chapter. With the existence of congruence now established, the following section aims to create an understanding of overall, macro, and micro-dimensions of congruence in sponsorship relationships.

4.2.3. Congruence: Overall, Macro and Micro-Dimensions

Congruence has commonly been examined on an overall basis with academics recently turning their attention to dimensions underpinning global congruence perceptions (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011; Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010). As such, findings initially focus on congruence as an overall concept before exploring specific dimensions, which have sometimes been referred to as macro and micro-dimensions (Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010). Given the numerous similarities and disparities between dimensions and how authors have expressed them, the following section incorporates classifications of macro and micro-congruence as guided by the research findings (see Table 4.4).

4.2.3.1. Case Study Findings: Overall and Macro-Dimensions of Congruence

The salient emphasis placed by sponsors on the importance of congruence within their respective relationships extends findings from the previous section. Table 4.3 highlights sponsor perceptions on the significant role of the theoretical concept as well as the proclivity for sponsors to utilise the term ‘fit’.

Table 4.3: Comments on Overall Congruence

Sponsor 2 (O + F)	Make sure that it is the right fit.
Sponsor 4 (I + F)	It was a good fit, it was a natural fit.
Sponsor 5 (O + F)	It was actually a perfect fit for us.
Sponsor 7 (I + S)	It’s a good fit for the sponsee and a good fit for us overall.
Sponsor 9 (I + P)	It’s part of the overall mix and it’s a good fit... it’s just a good fit for us.
Sponsor 10 (I + P)	The sponsee definitely fits.

When overall congruence was examined, three different macro-dimensions emerged from the findings and were employed for this thesis - **logical connections / makes sense, stands for similar things** or **marketing strategy**. As such, Table 4.4 collectively presents how overall congruence was classified into macro-dimensions and provides related micro-dimensions, which will be discussed in the next section.

Table 4.4: Classification of Overall, Macro and Micro-Dimensional Congruence

<i>Macro-Dimensions</i>	<i>Micro-Dimensions</i>
Marketing strategy	Alignment with company strategy
	Alignment with company objectives
	Geographical
	Local attributes
	Portfolio
	Promotional activities
Logical connection / makes sense	Target market or audience similarities
	Company duration*
	Functional
	Image
Stand for similar things	Time duration of sponsorship relationship
	Culture, principles, or philosophies*
	Mission or goals
	Values

*Note: * indicates proposed new dimensions*

Beginning with the macro-dimension of a **marketing strategy**, sponsors spoke of “commonalities in strategy that make a partnership work” (Sponsor 2, O + F). Moreover, during planning stages of marketing strategies, sponsors “look for a good fit” (Sponsor 4, I + F) and saw subsequent discussions relate specifically to micro-dimensions of **marketing strategy**. Similarly, findings did not produce highly obvious themes at the macro-dimensional level of a **logical connection / makes sense**. However, a sponsor implied this macro-dimension with the sponsee when they stated,

We are all about getting people back to their lives...so to a certain extent we are saying ‘Well, what a good way to get people back to their lives. Because when you are in a wheelchair, it doesn’t mean you can’t work. And how do you get [people] back to their lives, how do you have a normal life?’ Well, sport is a critical part. And us sponsoring some of the wheelchair sports we think is critical (Sponsor 6: O + F).

Further, the comment below indicates one sponsor explaining how **logical connections** were formed thereby ensuring the sponsorship relationship **made sense**.

You’ve got to try and transform that into something relevant over a number of years so that you’ve built a bridge so that when you are asking consumers... to accept the connection between [the sponsee] and [sponsor], that’s a very reasonable connection because you have seeded that association over the previous handful of years so it **makes sense** (Sponsor 3: I + F).

However, it was the macro-dimension of **standing for similar things** that was used to identify a strong theme within the findings. Over 40 different statements made from all ten participants inferred this particular macro-dimension of overall congruence. As highlighted in Table 4.5, **standing for similar things** meant common starting points, common objectives and common qualities, such as authenticity, embedded in the dyadic relationships regardless of the type, duration or nature of the sponsorship.

Table 4.5: Comments Regarding Sponsor and Sponsee **Standing for Similar Things**

Sponsor 2 (O + F)	We've got a common starting point.
Sponsor 5 (O + F)	We are loyal to our sponsees, our sponsees are loyal to us; They are the same aren't they? They [sponsee] are there to try and help athletes and we are there to try and help.
Sponsor 7 (I + S)	[Sponsee]'s got a lot of the qualities that represent our brand – the innovation, the fitness, and the tenacity.
Sponsor 9 (I + P)	Having an authentic, credible [sponsee] out there that lives and breathes health, fitness, wellbeing, improvement, motivation - it is a great fit for us when you look at what [the sponsor] products are all about.
Sponsor 8 (I + F)	Externally we try and promote that we are extremely professional, that we have integrity and everything is above board. That we are committed and dedicated and will fight hard for people. Internally we foster the commitment to each other – try to improve yourself, improve your mates. [The sponsee] is all of those things. [The sponsee] ticks everything that we want to be looking out and looking in.

Given findings relating to the three macro-dimensions of congruence have been presented, an examination of the related micro-dimensions within each category now follows.

4.2.3.2. Case Study Findings: Micro-Dimensions of Standing for Similar Things

Sponsor perceptions generated findings related to micro-dimensions of congruence thereby creating the detail that is deficient in both the overall concept and macro-dimensions. As highlighted in Table 4.4, the macro-dimension of **standing for similar things** was found to represent a myriad of micro-dimensions. In relationships that were financially orientated, congruence was implied when company **missions, philosophies, principles, goals** or **cultures** displayed synergies. These distinctions, as made by participants, can be seen in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Comments on Congruence Across Organisational Elements

Mission	
Sponsor 1 (O + F/P)	The sponsorship aligns very well with the [sponsee] and what their strategic direction is for now and 2010 and onwards.
Sponsor 6 (O + F)	Our strategic plan - ‘We want to be the best [industry] company and get injured people back to their lives’. And [the sponsee] is all about getting people back to their lives. So it is blunt.
Philosophy	
Sponsor 6 (O +F)	One of our philosophies is to get people back to their lives... [The sponsee] is all about saying to people that sport is an important part of a younger person’s life... And all of a sudden we just looked at the synergies going ‘We are trying to get people back to their life, [the sponsee] actually actively promotes sport for people in wheelchairs – perfect!’
Principles	
Sponsor 1 (O + F/P)	Our work there was for disability transport and obviously whomever we aligned with in sponsorship, had to have like-minded principles .
Culture	
Sponsor 1 (O + F/P)	It’s culture – both organisations are passionate about what they do.
Goals	
Sponsor 1 (O + F/P)	It’s a matter of having very similar goals .
Sponsor 2 (O + F)	There is an element of shared goals .
Sponsor 5 (O + F)	It is a perfect fit because we do have a common goal . The common goal , from our perspective, is we are supporting an organisation that has, and will continue to support some of our clients. And that is where the common interest is.

Standing for similar things was also found to imply shared **values** between the sponsor and property. While one organisational sponsorship relationship heavily espoused the significance of sharing similar **values**,

We are going to make sure that when we go into partnerships or sponsorships that their **values** are very much aligned with what our **values** are... It’s really identifying people who obviously have the same **values** as you and then work out the best way to align with them... We are out there doing the right things for the right reasons and anybody that is associated with us obviously has those same **values** as well (Sponsor 1 - O + F/P).

Shared **values** between the sponsor and property were of greater prominence in individual sponsorship relationships. This theme is demonstrated by Sponsor 3’s (I + F) comment “I was quite clear about those brand **values** from a [sponsor] point of

view such as we had with [the sponsee] because [the sponsee] played back all of those brand **values**.” Sponsor 9 (I + P) advanced this trend when they stated that “also understanding what the **values** are of the organisation or the individual so they link. It’s got to be real, they’ve got to connect.” Moreover, document analysis consolidated a **value** match at a strategic level in individual sponsorship relationships as the sponsor’s interest was implied in sport and sport was viewed as embodying unified values and challenges. The sponsor then adapts to the regions or countries where the brand is present to ensure congruence within relevant **target markets**. While sponsors provided specific **values** that were perceived to be mirrored across the dyadic relationships, Sponsor 3 (I + F)’s comment provides a specific example,

I think the integrity, that sense of belonging... That same integrity, the sense of belonging were displayed in a mini-way within this person called [the sponsee]... You’re actually saying that by associating with [the sponsee] that the **values** that [the sponsee] represents are the sort of **values** we’re proud of and want to associate with (Sponsor 3: I + F).

The emergence of congruent **values** evolved naturally from discussions with participants in individual sponsorship relationships. However, it was organisational sponsorship relationships that by means of a word association tool (Table 4.7) produced a greater number of congruent **values**, in conjunction with other word matches, when compared with individual sponsorship relationships. The word association tool saw sponsors initially provide five words for their respective organisations and then identify five words for the sponsee. The results of congruent **values** and other matches can be seen in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Findings from the Word Association Tool

<i>Generated words for both sponsor and sponsee</i>	<i>Organisational sponsorship relationships</i>	<i>Individual sponsorship relationships</i>
Shared values	Loyal, caring, secure, trusted	Healthy, fit, integrity
Other word matches	Long standing, family environment, culture, passion, innovative	Warmth (x2), belonging, magical, vibrant

4.2.3.3. Case Study Findings: Micro-Dimensions of Marketing Strategy

In relation to the macro-dimension of **marketing strategy**, sponsors opined a number of micro-dimensions. **Portfolio** congruence was viewed as enhancing the

consistency of brand meaning and provided clarity for the sponsor's brand within three relationships. This is highlighted in the statement,

Sponsorships for the business meant going in and aligning the brand within the **portfolio** of the business. We had sponsees outside of the business that helped reinforce or promote our brand in a favourable way (Sponsor 3: I + F).

Portfolio congruence was also deemed to be either critical from a sponsor viewpoint or expected from a consumer perspective. This helped to ensure a sound culture mix existed within a sponsor's **portfolio**, with Sponsor 2 (O + F) elucidating this viewpoint when they commented, "there are some groups that fit well into a sponsorship **portfolio**. And being a big company it is fairly expected that we will have some depth to our program".

Along similar lines, sponsors expressed how **target market** congruence facilitated sponsorship objectives such as increased sales or enhanced reputation. Reasons provided by sponsors included the perception of when **target market's** aligned, a "soft in" (Sponsor 1, O + F/P) was created with potential or existing consumers. The consumer link was specifically explained by Sponsor 5 (O + F) as "the fit is because of the nature of the work that we do and the nature of the clients i.e. those that have suffered spinal injuries". However, findings highlighted the applicability of **target market** congruence within organisational sponsorship relationships as opposed to sponsorships at an individual level.

Complementing **target market** congruence was when **audience similarities** existed between the sponsor and sponsee. One sponsorship relationship, heavily driven by brand protection and the enhancement of their reputation, noted "the people that the sponsee are working with have some synergies with our audience" (Sponsor 2: O + F). Also a clear focus in financial relationships was the extent to which the sponsor and sponsee had ties to the same **geographical** area. However, if the financial sponsorship had traces of philanthropic origins, **geographic** congruence was found to hold less significance. Almost as a subset of the **geographical** dimension, **local attributes** and links played a strong role in three relationships. In discussions with Sponsor 3 (I + F), it was brought to light that even though the sponsor is an international brand, the common perception is that it is an Australian company. Hence, congruence helped to reinforce brand **image** through the sense of belonging locally embodied in "a **local** [sponsee] from Australia" (Sponsor 3: I + F). Not only

does this example relate to the **local** micro-dimension but also highlights how the **image** micro-dimension can be formed through brand attributes, and thereby relates to the broader macro-dimension of **logical connection / makes sense**.

4.2.3.4 Case Study Findings: Micro-Dimensions of Logical Connection / Makes Sense

Within the macro-dimension of **logical connection / makes sense**, sponsors created **image** congruence through brand positioning within promotional communications. For example, Sponsor 4 (I + F) espoused how the sponsorship was “a good fit, it was a natural fit for us because we are an equal opportunity employer”. Publically available information regarding Sponsor 4 correlated heavily with this statement and further compounds the sponsor’s public stance as an equal opportunity employer. Additionally, **image** links were encapsulated within comments such as how the sponsee “fits our brand, look, and feel” (Sponsor 10, I + P).

Sponsors also referred to congruence through the micro-dimension of **time duration of the sponsorship relationships**. Two participants agreed, during both discussions and the word association tool, that associations are created over a number of years and that “one of the attributes of a high quality sponsorship is longevity” (Sponsor 3, I + F). Consequently, perceptions of trustworthiness existed thus facilitating further congruence in terms of **shared values** and brand positioning.

Also relating to the macro-dimension of **logical connection / makes sense**, was the micro-dimension of **functional** congruence. Sponsor 2 (O + F) explained that the sponsorship with the sponsee,

Fitted well with the **goals** at the time. The sponsee is about being active and we wanted to show that people [with a disability] can use the system...It was a visual demonstration that disabled people can use our services” (Sponsor 2: O + F).

The **functional dimension** emerged in an unprompted fashion across 50% of sponsorship relationships, with even distributions between organisational and individual sponsorships. However, it was found that there was a natural alignment of this dimension with product sponsorship relationships with Sponsor 9 commenting,

The sponsee is firmly in that space where they are obviously very active and needed products that gave them an edge and [the sponsor product] is a better product to have compared to [other products].” (Sponsor 9: I + P).

Compounding the applicability of **functional** congruence to product sponsorship relationships was the short ranking tool (see Table 4.8), which highlighted a comparatively higher ranking in this type of relationship. The short ranking tool also emphasised the specific nature of the **geographic** dimension as Sponsor 2 (O +F) ranked this particular dimension poorly as the sponsee was a statewide organisation as compared to purely metropolitan or existing in the **local** market. Participants also reinforced the general nature of the image dimension found during the interviews as **image**, on average, was ranked the highest across all sponsorship relationships. However, a disparity existed between findings and ratings provided by sponsors for the **target market** dimension. This was particularly evident in organisational relationships with lower ranking scores provided by participants.

Table 4.8: Short Ranking Tool Three – Dimensions of Congruence

<i>Congruence Dimension</i>	<i>Ave. score (n=10)</i>	<i>I ave. score (n=6)</i>	<i>O ave. score (n=4)</i>
Culture	5.95	6.25	5.50
Geographical	5.50	6.17	4.50
Image	6.00	5.83	6.25
Mission	5.40	5.33	5.50
Promotional activities	5.60	5.50	5.75
Target market	5.20	5.33	5.00
Functional	5.80	5.83	5.75
Visibility	4.90	4.83	5.00

Subsequent sections within this chapter will see discussions regarding micro-congruence dimensions of **promotional activities**, and **alignment with company strategy** or **objectives**. This was deemed appropriate as these micro-dimensions hold greater relevance and applicability to the second research question.

4.2.3.5 Case Study Discussion: Overall, Macro and Micro-Dimensions of Congruence

The effectiveness of sponsorship as an integrated marketing communications device has been shown to increase when congruence exists between the sponsor and sponsee (Martensen *et al.*, 2007; Rifon *et al.*, 2004) with resultant benefits for both sides of the sponsorship dyad (Tripodi, 2001). In this light, the prominence and significance of congruence within disability sport sponsorship relationships suggested that the majority of sponsors are attempting to utilise, either consciously or unconsciously, the construct in bids to convey brand messages to target audiences.

The extensive utilisation of the term fit, which was employed by nine out of ten sponsors to describe the theoretical concept in an **overall** manner, not only shows commonality with literature (Olson, 2010; Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006) but also demonstrates how disability sport sponsorship relationships should approach the construct as it is the most understood term and thus will facilitate maximum understanding within their current or potential relationships.

Some sponsors displayed an acknowledgement to underlying theories regarding congruence when discussing how longevity builds up associations within the minds of consumers to help ensure **logical connections** are formed, thereby resulting in a sponsorship relationship **making sense**. As such, it appeared that sponsors are making reference to schema theory to explain how congruence facilitates positive sponsorship attitudes (McDaniel, 1999).

As demonstrated in Table 4.4, findings relating to specific macro and micro-dimensions of congruence provided support for a number of different dimensions currently existing in the literature. The importance placed by sponsors on the macro-dimension, **standing for similar things**, highlighted how this broad statement holds a myriad of meanings across different disability sport sponsorship relationships and as such needs to be contextualised within each relationship to determine relevant connotations. Logically, this finding is reflected in the literature, as **standing for similar things** has been a measure of **overall** congruence in a number of different research papers (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011; Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006; Speed & Thompson, 2000). However, the current research provided the detail needed to determine the basis of **standing for similar things** and as such generated tangible and measurable micro-dimensions when examining **standing for similar things**. Findings indicated that if the relationship is business-to-business, the presence of congruence across **missions**, **goals**, and **principles** holds more relevance as obviously alignment in these areas with regards to individual sponsorship relationships is not highly applicable. As such, this study supports Turner et al. (2010) findings that a congruent brand **image** can be created through shared **visions**, **values** and **ideals**. However, the research presented here further develops these themes by illustrating specific relevance of dimensions applicable to sponsors of disability sporting organisations.

Subsequently, while **missions**, **goals**, and **principles** held greater relevance to organisational relationships, **value** congruency was emphasised in individual

sponsorship relationships. In a sense, this finding is partly reflected within research conducted by Dees et al. (2010) who investigated personality congruence from a consumer perspective as opposed to congruent **values** from a sponsor viewpoint. However, Dees et al. (2010) findings of personality fit positively effecting variables, such as consumer attitude towards sponsor or brand, is partially demonstrated in that there was a role played by personality congruence when shared **values** existed in individual disability sport sponsorship relationships. As such, when an individual sponsee connected with the sponsor through congruent **values**, either at a personal or brand **value** level, congruence was created within relationships. Moreover, findings generated through the word association tool relating to shared **values** in organisational relationships, reflect those of Geue and Plewa (2010) where congruent sponsorships appeared to be **value**-driven. Similarly, the word association tool and related findings also support Farrelly and Greysen (2007) who found that common **values** were used to strategically motivate employees given that sponsorship was used as an internal marketing vehicle.

Congruent **values** also included sponsors stating that in the presence of incongruent **values**, a sponsorship relationship would not eventuate because disability sport sponsors would “not associate with just anyone” (Sponsor 3, I + F). Indeed, three sponsors suggested that if a sponsee was considered incongruent with the sponsor brand because their **values** indicated a bad reputation, image, or were deemed to be controversial, a sponsorship association would not be entered into. Admittedly, incongruence was not perceived to have been a factor in dissolving any of the three sponsorship relationships that had ended. However, wider examples outside the existing study, which support sponsor perceptions, include the Transport Accident Commission terminating a sponsorship agreement with Collingwood Football Club in 2008 after a player was charged with drink driving (Roberts, 2008). Interestingly, exceptions existed to the requirement of sponsees having a spotless image (Thwaites *et al.*, 1999). Such was the case within one disability sport sponsorship where associations with niche sport markets enabled an ‘irreverent’ element thereby permitting the sponsor to employ brand-positioning differentiation. The comment, “it is not necessarily just having that mainstream person. We are not a brand that’s just going to jump off and say thanks but no thanks during those times... We are not necessarily all about being clean cut”, captures the exception to the rule.

Consequently, it becomes evident that **standing for similar things** in disability sport sponsorships relationships through congruent elements such as **goals**, **missions**, or **values**, is highly esteemed by sponsors. Explanations for this finding can be found both in short ranking tool three and comments made by Sponsor 3 (I + F). It was suggested that because **visibility** of Paralympians within society is lower, other dimensions or ways to match the sponsor with the sponsee, such as **standing for similar things**, were more important and should thus be sought in these specific relationships.

As the research was exploratory in nature, additional micro-dimensions not found in existing literature were discovered. To recognise and incorporate contributions made by sponsors, these dimensions will be presented under future research directions in chapter five. Interestingly, one of the proposed dimensions is that of **company duration**. This dimension was evident in three sponsorship relationships and while not identified as a dimension of congruence, can be found in the study by Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2004). These researchers reported sponsors of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games felt that because of their history and length of establishment, a need and obligation existed to sponsor the Olympics – a sponsee also with an established history.

Findings created additional insight across the micro-dimensions of **image**, **target market** and **functional** congruence, when compared with definitions found in Appendix A. Currently, not only do multiple definitions for the **image** dimension exist but they are also extremely broad in nature (see Appendix A). As such, it is possible that the strong ranking of the **image** dimension could be attributed to numerous interpretations of the term by the sponsors. Nonetheless, if an **image** link was created within the sponsorship, such as with brand or product attributes (Keller, 1993), the existence of congruence across other dimensions was facilitated. One example, in accordance with Crompton (2004), is how **image** components include trust and credibility – two strong **values** shared within a number of the relationships investigated.

However, in the sense that the current **image** dimension within the literature holds numerous meanings, the narrow definition presently relating **functional** congruence, was found to be restrictive in disability sport sponsorship relationships. For example, when a sponsee consumed sponsor products as part of their daily training routine, a clear **functional** link was evident but would not fulfill the current

definition of **functional** congruence as it was not consumed ‘during the game’ (see Appendix A). As such, findings supported suggestions by Poon and Prendergast (2006) who identified that the existing dimension needs to be expanded to ‘use of the brand either directly or indirectly’.

The disability sport sponsorship case reported here found that **target market** congruence varied across sponsorship relationships. Some sponsors perceived a significant **target market** alignment, which is in line with other sponsorship research (Cornwell, 1995; Olson & Thjømøe, 2011; Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010). However, Sponsor 2 (O + F) highlighted that strong voices exist in small segments of a customer base. Consequently, disability sport sponsorships were found to alleviate or combat the strong minority voices found in specific **target** segments. As such, findings demonstrated the need for a sponsorship **portfolio** to include a disability sport sponsee in these ever-increasing times of political correctness, equal opportunity legislation, and competitions between municipalities for ‘the most inclusive’ award.

4.2.4 Comparison with Able-Bodied Sponsorship Relationships

The fact that congruence has been extensively researched in able-bodied sponsorship relationships has been heavily emphasised throughout this thesis (e.g., Gwinner & Bennett, 2008). The purpose of this section is to compare and contrast sponsor perceptions of congruence in disability sponsorship relationships with that of able-bodied sponsorship relationships.

4.2.4.1. Case Study Findings: Comparison with Able-Bodied Sponsorship Relationships

Sponsors’ awareness and perception of congruence was not limited to disability sport sponsorship relationships. There were unprompted comments made regarding congruence in able-bodied sport properties with general consensus on congruence captured in the comment,

Fit is everything that makes a sponsorship what it is – it is macro and micro - micro to each other’s customers and macro... in what it represents (Sponsor 7, I + S)

No major differences were found in terms of overall congruence and how this was expressed in able-bodied relationships. However, when contrasting disability properties with that of able-bodied, interesting trends occurred in micro-dimensions of

congruence. On the whole, when sponsors had other able-bodied sport properties, there were quantitatively more micro-dimensions expressed for these relationships in comparison with the disability sport sponsee. The exception was Sponsor 6 (O + F) where the prime focus throughout the interview was on the disability sport sponsee and thereby resulted in an emphasis on related micro-dimensions. Table 4.9 highlights these results.

Table 4.9: Comparison of Micro-Dimensions of Congruence

<i>Sponsor</i>	<i>Disability sport sponsorship relationship</i>	<i>Other sponsorship relationships</i>
Sponsor 3 (I + F)	Local attributes, values	Functional, geographical , local attributes, portfolio, promotional activities, strategy alignment, time duration of sponsorship , values
Sponsor 4 (I + F)	Image, philosophy	Company duration, culture, geographical, goals, local attributes, values
Sponsor 6 (O + F)	Company duration, culture, geographical , goals, mission, philosophy, promotional activities, strategy alignment, target market	Goals, mission
Sponsor 7 (I + S)	Image, values	Image, portfolio, target market , values, visibility, visual/colour
Sponsor 9 (I + P)	Functional, image, promotional activities, values	Functional, Geographical , image, promotional activities, target market , values, visibility
Sponsor 10 (I + P)	Functional, image, strategy alignment, time duration for sponsorship , values	Functional, image, strategy alignment, values

Note: **BOLD** represents different micro-dimensions across sponsored properties

4.2.4.2. Case Study Discussion: Comparison with Able-Bodied Sponsorship Relationships

The intent of this thesis was not to differentiate congruence within each specific relationship. However, in light of the insight provided by the findings, it was deemed appropriate to briefly discuss obvious themes. When examining the findings in a quantitative fashion, the number of dimensions referenced within able-bodied sport properties is generally significantly higher than that of disability sport properties. Thus, it would appear that congruence is emphasised to a greater extent

within able-bodied sport properties given the unprompted nature of the micro-dimensions and focus during interviews on respective disability sport properties. The point that must be stressed is that while more dimensions were mentioned with reference to able-bodied sport properties, the dimensions themselves in both able-bodied sport properties and disability sport sponsees do not differ significantly from current literature.

4.2.5. Summary for Research Question One

The previous section has summarised the findings in relation to RQ1 and resulted in an exploration of congruence in disability sport sponsorship relationships. Not only have the findings demonstrated the importance of the theoretical concept but also related congruence to overall, macro, and micro-dimensions. As a result, thirteen different micro-dimensions were categorised into three macro-dimensions - **standing for similar things, logical connection / makes sense**, and **marketing strategy** (see Table 4.4). The research has also provided external validation for existing micro-dimensions as well as identified additional micro-dimensions applicable to disability sponsorship relationships. Consequently, specific findings reflected each sub-research question associated with RQ1. The next section will focus on findings and discussions related to RQ2 where congruence was explored in relation to the sponsorship management framework.

4.3. RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: CONGRUENCE IN SPONSORSHIP MANAGEMENT

Having established the importance of congruence within disability sport sponsorship relationships, as well as relevant macro and micro-dimensions, the thesis will now turn to operationalisation of congruence within sponsorship relationships. As demonstrated in the literature review, components of the sport management framework include selection, strategy, objectives, implementation and measurement or evaluation (Arthur *et al.*, 1997; Cornwell, 1995). With specific reference to each stage of the sponsorship management framework, the perceived role of congruence will be explored and discussed. For the sake of simplicity and parsimony, the second section will refer to overall and micro-congruence dimensions thereby implying associated macro-dimensions, as viewed in Table 4.4.

4.3.1. Congruence in Sponsorship Selection

While placement of the stage, sponsorship selection, differs in its position across frameworks (Arthur *et al.*, 1997; Cornwell, 1995; Karg, 2007), Aguilar-Manjarrez et al. (1997) highlighted sponsee selection occurs early in sponsorship programs. As such, the appropriateness of initiating section two with sponsorship selection was based on literature guidelines as well as an ability to create context, and thereby facilitated subsequent discussions.

4.3.1.1. Case Study Findings: Congruence in Sponsorship Selection

The scope of this thesis does not permit an entire narrative on disability sponsorship selection. As such, Appendix L presents how each sponsorship relationship began alongside the associated reasons as perceived by the sponsors. In addition to this information, it was found that sponsorship selection was aided when the sponsee was upfront about issues regarding disabilities thereby facilitating a strong foundation upon which the sponsorship relationship could grow.

The sponsee was very upfront, very authentic and pragmatic right from the start. He never pretended that he was Ian Thorpe. The sponsee acknowledged that straight off the bat their disability was a difficult conversation or the unspoken elephant in the room. They wafted that right out of the room by being upfront (Sponsor 3, I + F).

Holding greater relevance to this thesis were findings that suggested congruence played a significant role in sponsorship selection. As has been previously highlighted, the macro-dimension of **standing for similar things** in some sponsorships related to shared **missions**. This micro-dimension of congruence was found to be salient during sponsorship selection, particularly in organisational relationships where it is naturally more relevant. Sponsor 5 (O + F) perceived selection of the sponsee occurred because it was the “perfect fit given the fit doing the type of work we do”; the sponsor has “a lot of spinal clients who have actually gone onto the sporting environment - it is just the perfect fit supporting a sporting organisation”. In the same way, micro-dimensions of **philosophies** and **audience similarities** aided sponsee selection. One sponsor commented that,

Our customers have severe injuries...we wanted to sponsor someone with the really serious injuries. What resonates more is getting young people back to their lives. We have had a **philosophy** of wanting to get people back to their lives. We kept looking at it going 'Oh sport!' What is more significant for a person to have a life than be able to participate and play sport?! (Sponsor 6: O + F)

Also under the macro-dimensions of **standing for similar** things was an agreement by sponsors that **values** reflected by the sponsee contributed to sponsee selection. For example, shared authenticity was important in three sponsorship relationships. Sponsor 9 (I + P) expressed this viewpoint in the statement, "the sponsee was keen to get out and promote brand, sing the sponsor song but had an authenticity... it was a good fit". Not only does this demonstrate **value** congruence but also the role played by **overall** congruence. Sponsor 7 (I + S) continued the **overall** congruence theme when they stated that it was an "internal decision to offer sponsorship to the sponsee at the time as the sponsee was seen as a good fit for the brand." Moreover, when looking at what sponsees to associate with, the statement "you always look for a good fit" (Sponsor 4, I +F) leaves little doubt as to the importance of congruence between a sponsor and sponsee.

During sponsorship selection, sponsors in individual sponsorship relationships also indicated congruence through forming connections with the sponsee given they **stood for similar things**. One sponsor described this as,

There were other people that I met on the [disability sport] team that didn't have the same level of warmth and authenticity as the sponsee... They just didn't have the same personality that the sponsee had that connected us... The sponsee connected with colleagues and provided an accessible way to disability issues and created that insight (Sponsor 3, I + F).

Other sponsors perceived dimensions such as **portfolio**, **geographical**, and **image** congruence as influencing selection of the sponsee. Found within a number of sponsorship selection criteria were requirements of **target market** alignment. However, when Sponsor 2 (O + F) was asked to expand upon their sponsorship guideline statement an interesting insight was created for the disability sponsorship relationship. Sponsor 2 (O + F) highlighted that by percentage, able-bodied people far outweigh people with a disability in Australia. As such, this results in only a small percentage of people with a disability using their services. Subsequently, a lack of

congruence in terms of **target market** existed but sponsorship selection was based on having a “disability group by the way of having a broad **portfolio**”. Reasons offered for this strategy included suggestions that “some groups fit well into a sponsorship **portfolio**” (Sponsor 2, O + F). Consequently, the sponsorship relationship could not be viewed in a “brutally business minded” way (Sponsor 2, O + F).

Sponsee selection based upon **target market** congruence was also seen in a complementary form in one other sponsorship relationship. In this relationship, the sponsee was specifically selected, as congruence existed through both dyads having involvement in the community thereby creating a community brand **image**. However, **target market** congruence was achieved in a non-traditional sense as the sponsee “resonates particularly well with older people” as “if anyone knows what it is like to be young and incapacitated [i.e. the sponsee target market]... it is older people” (Sponsor 6, O +F). As such, sponsee selection was based on specific objectives and was further explained in the comment,

That fits in perfectly, particularly that group at 40+ where you have kids and you know that if something happens, the sponsor is working with the sponsee to really make an impact and it is not just a nice thing to do but it is like ‘at least they are putting their money into something worthwhile’ (Sponsor 6, O + F)

This highlights **target market** congruence does only occur between sponsor and sponsee **target markets** but also how congruence enables sponsors to reach their particular **target market**. Interestingly, Sponsor 1 (O + P/F) provided insight into **target market** congruence playing a significant role in sponsorship renewal. This was due to a change in the sponsee’s strategic direction, which resulted in an increased **target market** alignment between the sponsor and sponsee. Indeed, Sponsor 1 (O + F/P) emphasised that this was a “massive, massive reason for continuing the sponsorship”.

Reinforcing perceptions provided by sponsors were sponsorship guideline statements where selection was based upon congruence between the sponsee, sponsor and sponsor objectives. Additionally, the short ranking tool (see Appendix J) brought to light the dimension of **local attributes** during sponsorship selection as it prompted Sponsor 8 (I +F) to comment that they “like to see money stay **local**... and support somebody **locally**”.

4.3.1.2. Case Study Discussion: Congruence in Sponsorship Selection

Similar to Arthur et al. (1997), decisions to invest in sport sponsorship were based on an array of rational and emotional motives. Sponsorship selection was found to be heavily influenced by congruence as evident throughout the findings and could even be considered critical in the majority of relationships. In line with previous literature (Meenaghan, 1998; Thjømmøe *et al.*, 2002), many sponsorship relationships were based upon the ‘director’s choice’ and related ‘someone that knew someone’ (see Appendix L). Nevertheless, the role of congruence during sponsorship selection was indicated to be one of high importance. Specifically relating to the notion of director’s choice, sponsors emphasised personality congruence between themselves and the sponsee as a motivating factor for sponsorship selection. Indeed, personality congruence formed the basis for half of the individual sponsorship relationships thereby demonstrating the need for individual sponsees seeking sponsorship to determine and reflect sponsor **values**. As a result of personality congruence, the sponsees developed positive associative networks regarding disabilities in the minds of their sponsors. Hence, to a certain extent, this thesis supports authors such as Cornwell et al. (2006) and Rogers (2003) who have utilised the associative networks theory to explain the congruence construct.

Contrastingly, it was dimensions such as **mission** or **philosophy** alignment that was of greater importance in organisational sponsorship selection. Interestingly, these dimensions were more pertinent than **image** congruence. Admittedly, as discussed previously in findings relating to micro-dimensions, the majority of sponsors reflected comments made by Thwaites et al. (1999) that a prerequisite for selection was a clean **image** thereby ensuring the avoidance of incongruence. However, this finding along with others does not support previous academics, who found **image** congruence, or **functional** congruence, were among the most important criteria in sponsorship selection (Copeland *et al.*, 1996; Irwin *et al.*, 1994; Marshall & Cook, 1992; Turner *et al.*, 2010). Although, sponsor selection decisions did partially mirror criteria found in the evaluation model for sponsorship selection as proposed by Irwin and Asimakopoulos (1992), and Meenaghan’s (1983) sponsorship selection tool. Commonalities between the findings and the literature included corporate-**image** links and **mission** or **philosophy**, **image-target market** fit, and demographic fit as seen in **target market** congruence.

In the case described here, sponsor perceptions suggested that **target market** congruence and congruence within a sponsorship **portfolio** were powerful selection tools. This finding is reflected in “the selection of a sport that provides exposure to the **target market** of the company is crucial for realising product / brand objectives” (Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992, p. 47). Numerous other authors have also emphasised **target market** congruence (Cornwell, 1995; Doherty & Murray 2007; Javalgi *et al.*, 1994, Meenaghan, 1983) as this facilitates strategic communication links and ensures brand equity is not subject to question (Fleck & Quester, 2007).

As a result of findings and discussions, it is apparent that standing for **similar for things** as a macro-dimension, and **target market, portfolio, and geographic** congruence as micro-dimensions, were pertinent in disability sport sponsorship selection. Given these dimensions, a synergy between sponsorship initiatives and various levels of organisational strategy was facilitated.

4.3.2. Congruence in Sponsorship Strategy

Sponsorship as a strategic activity enables the development of corporate advantages (Fahy *et al.*, 2004) and strengthens corporate strategy (Berrett & Slack, 1999). While specific sponsorship strategies existed across each relationship, findings and discussions will revolve around congruence within sponsorship strategy.

4.3.2.1. Case Study Findings: Congruence in Sponsorship Strategy

Seven of the sponsorships investigated highlighted congruence within sponsorship strategy, with particular emphasis placed upon this stage by organisational and financial relationships. Naturally, it was the two philanthropic relationships where congruence in sponsorship strategy did not play a significant role. Providing insight into congruence in sponsorship strategy was the comment that the sponsorship “aligns very well with [the sponsee] and what their strategic direction is for now, 2010, and onwards” (Sponsor 1, O + P/F). In this specific example, congruence in sponsorship strategy increased due to a shift in the sponsee’s strategic direction thereby resulting in the micro-dimension of **target market** congruence. As such, the role of congruence changed in a positive way during the relationship. This was mirrored in other organisational sponsorships where initial motivators revolved around the “warm and fuzzy” feeling but are currently “much more tied to the needs of the business” (Sponsor 2, O + F). Explanations for the shift in sponsorship

strategies revolved around protecting the reputation of sponsors “from people who claim we are not doing things” (Sponsor 2, O +F).

However, congruence in company strategy was not only related to corporate reputation and brand protection but also to the potential credibility it would create. One sponsor commented that their “strategy is to work with specific stakeholders. Strategically, we want to work and influence these stakeholders across Australia. Our sponsorship allows us to have a seat at the table” (Sponsor 6, O + F). When asked to expand further upon this statement, the sponsor noted that,

From a strategic point of view, it gives us credibility when we go to the authority and say ‘We want to be part of your license and have a license’. We are actually coming in and saying, ‘Well, not only do we do [business activity] but we actually participate in the community and are trying to make lives better for the sponsee.’ And what better way to do that is there than the sponsee! (Sponsor 6, O + F)

As such, congruence is evident in terms of aligning company **missions** and strategies with the sponsee to help facilitate sponsorship objectives such as increased brand health and being involved in the community.

While not as prominent in individual sponsorship strategies, congruence was evident in the macro-dimension, **standing for similar things**, and related **value** micro-dimension. One sponsor’s strategy revolved around differentiation from competition by positioning the product with authenticity due to the extensive science supporting it. Consequently, the sponsorship strategy involved the sponsee exhibiting authenticity and thus demonstrated **value** congruence. Furthering the trend of **values** reflected by individual sponsees was a comment made by Sponsor 3 (I +F),

To formulate a sponsorship strategy, you need to be crystal clear about the brand **values** that may not be in place right now but the ones you are aspiring to have... I was quite clear about those brand **values** from a [sponsor] point of view such as we had with [sponsee] because [sponsee] played back all of those brand **values** (Sponsor 3, I + F).

Reflecting sponsor perceptions were ranking results provided by sponsors during the first short ranking tool (see Table 4.10). The tool demonstrated that motivators of disability sport sponsorship relationships included a strong desire to align the sponsorship with the company strategy. Similarly, the tool reinforced findings through demonstrating that organisational sponsors placed a greater emphasis on strategy alignment as compared with other types of relationships. Indeed, it

prompted the comment from one sponsor that “alignment with company strategy is really important” (Sponsor 6, O +F). Furthermore, the short ranking tool highlighted how sponsors were motivated in terms of the sponsorship aligning with company objectives and that these objectives are less tangible in nature. Findings and related discussion on sponsorship objectives will occur in the following section.

Table 4.10: Short Ranking Tool One – Motivators of Sponsorship Relationships

<i>Motivator</i>	<i>Ave. score (n=10)</i>	<i>I ave. score (n=6)</i>	<i>O ave. score (n=4)</i>
Sponsorship aligns with company strategy	6.30	5.83	7.00
Sponsorship aligns with corporate objectives	5.80	5.67	6.00
Tangible benefits	4.55	4.92	4.00
Intangible benefits	6.10	5.83	6.50
Other: Good fit *	6.00	6.00	NA

*Note: * indicates n=1*

4.3.2.2. Case Study Discussion: Congruence in Sponsorship Strategy

Congruence has been extensively studied in order to determine how and why it can assist marketing strategy decisions with the aim of establishing which sporting organisation or individual to sponsor (Fleck & Quester, 2007). The case study findings reported here indicated that within disability sport sponsorships, there is an increasing role of congruence in sponsorship strategy and related decision-making activities. This is in alignment with literature and the key role played by sponsorship in integrated marketing communications (Dolphin, 2003) as well as the need to link sponsorship activities with broader corporate strategy (Amis *et al.*, 1999). Interestingly, the view held by Sponsor 2 (O + F) indicated sponsorship strategy can be defensive in nature to aid in protection of reputation. It was through **portfolio** congruence that the sponsor believed this strategy would be achieved.

Congruence in sponsorship strategy was differentiated across organisational and individual sponsorship relationships. The logical alignment of sponsor and sponsee **missions** related specifically to organisational strategies. This was in comparison to the role of brand **value** congruence in individual sponsorship strategies. As such, this finding partially supported Alexander (2009) where the

sponsor's strategy saw semantic fit employed to redefine and establish new brand **values**. However, Alexander's (2009) case study involved an organisational sponsorship relationship and is thus not entirely reflected in the findings.

A point emphasised by Cornwell (1995) is that during a situation analysis, which precedes strategy development, **geographical** congruence needs to be taken into account. The research findings did not note **geographical** congruence within decisions related to sponsorship strategy, perhaps indicating non-localisation strategies of sponsors. However, sponsors did agree with Cornwell (1995) that **target market** congruence holds applicability to sponsorship strategy. As Cornwell (1995) suggested, **target market** congruence enables associations to be created and built with specific audiences and thereby facilitates objectives of increasing corporate image and awareness.

The various congruence macro and micro-dimensions, along with results from the short ranking tool, facilitated the centrality of the congruence theme in sponsorship strategy. In this, the research supported other results where it was critical for sponsorship goals to be congruent with those of the organisation as a whole thus producing strategy alignment (Farrelly *et al.*, 1997; Irwin & Amisakopoulos, 1992). Moreover, the findings of the current study are reflected by Berrett and Slack (1999), who highlighted companies exhibited differing links between sponsorship activities and corporate strategy. Subsequently, companies who perceived stronger links believed the sponsorship was more successful. In this way, some sponsors indicated that congruence helped to avoid conflicting messages within the overall company strategy. In contrast, it was the philanthropically orientated sponsorships that displayed a lack of synergy to broader corporate strategies thereby further reinforcing the results of Berrett and Slack (1999).

4.3.3. Congruence in Sponsorship Objectives

Sponsorship strategy (Berrett & Slack, 1999) and objectives form the introductory stage in sponsorship management (Karg, 2007). In light of congruence within sponsorship strategy, a focus will now be placed on the construct within disability sport sponsorship objectives.

4.3.3.1. Case Study Findings: Congruence in Sponsorship Objectives

When asked to explain objectives relating to the sponsorship relationship, it was common for sponsors to opine the importance of congruence as an **overall** construct, as well as at a macro and micro-dimension level. In reference to **overall** congruence, Sponsor 4 (I + F) felt the objective of increasing revenue was achieved given “a good fit” existed. However, while **overall** congruence was apparent for objectives in their own right, philanthropic sponsors did not perceive sponsorship relationships aligning with corporate objectives or congruence impacting other objectives.

Pertinent to organisational sponsorships, as well as to two individual relationships, was the objective of involvement in the community. Indeed, one sponsor with multiple brands picked out a specific brand as the brand “fits well in the community” (Sponsor 6, O + F). A component of community involvement related to CSR with one sponsor stating “CSR – why should you do it? Because you should” (Sponsor 2, O + F). Consequently, the purpose of sponsors “connecting with local communities” (Sponsor 2, O + F) was to “establish in people’s minds that the sponsor is working and helping these people [i.e. the sponsee]” (Sponsor 6, O + F). However, some of the larger organisational sponsors perceived community involvement as a means of generating long-term sales. Sponsor 6 (O + F) volunteered that they “can get more business and make more money in the long term by actually doing this good stuff for the community – it is enlightened self-interest and it is a really good thing”. Within this relationship and others, the objective of community involvement was facilitated due to **like-minded principles** thereby enabling the creation of associations within the minds of relevant stakeholders, clients and consumers.

Also linked to sales objectives was the congruence dimension of **target market** alignment. One sponsor spoke of a direct **target market** match enabling the organisation to generate new business.

[The sponsee] members are members with a disability. The sponsor’s customers were people with a disability... The sponsee’s new members were potential, or existing, customers. So aligning them together and introducing them to each other. If the sponsor can not get at them one way, then using the sponsee as a conduit to get their business (Sponsor 1: O + F/P).

The comments provided above, along with discussions with other sponsors, indicated the objective of third party advocacy endorsement and how word-of-mouth advertising can be extremely beneficial for sponsors. Confirming this view was a statement from Sponsor 2 (O + F) where “if the sponsee says something to their members about us, that would carry more weight compared to our other sponsees putting the same message out to their audience”. As a result, not only do sponsors perceive **target market** congruence as impacting sales but also producing increased networks, an enhanced image, and improved brand health. Additionally, **target market** congruence related to the sponsorship objective of increasing staff motivation. Congruence in **target markets** was viewed as a medium to enable staff to “appreciate the clients they are acting for” (Sponsor 5, O + F) and hence develop an “understanding and appreciation of diversity” (Sponsor 1, O + P/F).

One unique finding provided by Sponsor 6 (O + F) demonstrated the ability of sponsorship relationships to achieve multiple objectives, how objectives stem from both company strategy and selection, as well contain congruence through **like-minded principles** and **mission** alignment.

It gives us the credibility when we go to the stakeholder and say ‘We want to be part of your license and have a license’. We are actually coming in and saying, ‘well, not only do we do claims but we actually participate in the community and trying to make lives better for people.’ And what better ways in there than the sponsee... So now they [health community] will have a positive attitude towards us (Sponsor 6, O + F)

Reputation enhancement through community involvement also implied **visibility** congruence through sponsors promoting sponsees. This led sponsors to believe the community would think, “these guys are alright. They help out in the community, they must be good blokes” (Sponsor 1, O + P/F). Interestingly, a philanthropic relationship commented that if the sponsorship “puts our firm out there and creates a level of awareness and people see we are making a difference in someone else’s life, then that is a bonus for us” (Sponsor 5: O + F). Consequently, sponsors perceived objectives related to promotional community activities would facilitate the creation of **image** links. One sponsor highlighted this in the comment, “it really is about showing access and that we are doing something on the access side of things” (Sponsor 2, O + F). As such, wheelchair sponsees provided the sponsor with a vehicle of achieving this objective due to the presence of **image** congruence.

Sponsor 2 (O + F) created an interesting insight into the role of congruence across both sponsorship selection and objectives. Within the sponsorship relationship, sponsorship management was “generally more structured” and conservative than what Sponsor 2 had with the sponsee. Consequently, Sponsor 2 would “dip [their] toes into the water” before “jumping into bed” with sponsees. As a result, sponsorship relationships have not usually initiated with Sponsor 2 providing financial assistance to sponsees. This was interesting as the disability sport sponsorship relationship had always been financially orientated but was viewed as “easy”, “flexible”, and “not high maintenance” (Sponsor 2). The contradiction suggested when objectives relate to leveraging a sponsors reputation with the intent of brand protection, the role played by **portfolio** congruence could be quite large.

Confirming a tendency for sponsors to emphasise intangible objectives were results from the second short ranking tool (see Table 4.11). Moreover, the comparatively lower ranking of tangible benefits also reinforced the major objectives of community involvement and increasing staff motivation found during interview discussions. Triangulation of findings also occurred through document analysis, which revealed congruence in community-related objectives due to synergies facilitating **mission** fulfillment of sponsors and their related sponsees.

Table 4.11: Short Ranking Tool Two – Objectives of Sponsorship Relationships

<i>Objective group</i>	<i>Ave. score (n=10)</i>	<i>I ave. score (n=6)</i>	<i>O ave. score (n=4)</i>
Establish/increase brand awareness	5.3	5.33	5.25
Improve brand health/perception	5.6	5.33	6.00
Increase sales/market share	4.2	5.00	3.00
Communicate with target markets	4.9	5.33	4.25
Gain media exposure	4.8	5.17	4.25
Engage and motivate employees	5.6	5.50	5.75
Enhance client relations	4.9	5.00	4.75
Enhance corporate image/leverage reputation	5.6	5.50	5.75
Community involvement/promote corporate citizenship	5.9	5.83	6.00
Other: Balanced sponsorship portfolio*	5.00	NA	5.00

*Note: * indicates n=1*

4.3.3.2. Case Study Discussion: Congruence in Sponsorship Objectives

Desbordes et al. (2004) suggested sponsorship objectives can be grouped into corporate, communication and brand objectives. Findings, in conjunction with short ranking tool results, demonstrated the majority of sponsors focused upon broad communication and brand objectives such as community involvement, increasing brand health or corporate image, and leveraging employee morale. These findings are reflected to a certain extent by previous research (Dolphin, 2003; Howard & Compton, 2004; Quester & Thompson, 2001; Tripodi, 2001) but the lack of emphasis placed by sponsors upon sales objectives is not in alignment with prior studies (Dolphin, 2003; Easton & Mackie, 1998; Javalgi *et al.* 1994).

Pertinently, communication and brand objectives capitalised on congruence thereby enabling “communities to look at [the sponsor] in a different light to other companies” (Sponsor 6, O +F). As such, brand objectives related to the creation of emotional connections with **target audiences**. Similar to Geue and Plewa (2010), sponsors believed **values** would be transferred from the sponsee to the sponsor thereby resulting in credibility and ability to leverage sponsorship relationships. Reflecting congruence in sponsorship strategy, schema theory along with the associative networks principle offered appropriate explanations for the transfer of **values**. However, attribution theory and the discounting principle were able to complement these explanations and provided further insight. As suggested by Rifon et al. (2004), sponsors utilised congruence to ensure the creation of altruistic perceptions thus internal motivators have not been discounted. As a result, brand equity was nurtured in sponsorship relationships (Richelieu *et al.*, 2008). However, Geue and Plewa (2010) cautioned too much congruence might result in perceptions of egoistic motivations.

Findings clearly demonstrated how objectives worked in combination, interrelate and overlapped, in line with previous research (Cornwell *et al.*, 2001; Meenaghan, 1983; Thwaites, 1995). One such example was when congruence existed through **mission** alignment, a number of related objectives existed. Subsequently, these objectives were ranked the highest and reinforced through document analysis. Possible explanations include how these objectives are the predominant goals of sponsorship arrangements as they directly relate to sponsee **image** alignment (Fahy *et al.*, 2004). This was particularly evident in product sponsorship relationships where

an **image** link was plainly visible and worked alongside the **functional** dimension of congruence.

While presented in the previous section, results from short ranking tool one (Table 4.10) highlighted how congruence is present when the sponsorship aligns with corporate objectives. In this, the case reported here supported Meenaghan's (1983) marketing communications hierarchy of objectives. However, both findings and the ranking tool suggested this was more applicable in organisational and financial sponsorship relationships, thus implying commercialisation and professionalisation varies across different types of disability sport sponsorship relationships.

4.3.4. Congruence in Sponsorship Implementation

From a sponsor perspective, sponsorship strategy and objectives generally influence how a sponsorship is leveraged both internally and externally. The section initiates with a brief presentation of common leveraging activities as well as specific disability sport leveraging activities. This facilitates findings regarding the role of congruence in leveraging activities and is supported by short ranking tool three (Appendix J) before the case study discussion.

4.3.4.1. Case Study Findings: Congruence in Sponsorship Implementation

The connection between sponsorship strategy, objectives and implementation impacted the nature of leveraging activities within sponsorship relationships. Moreover, three sponsors emphasised how leveraging a relationship was just as important, if not more, than putting finances into a sponsorship contract.

You can pay a lot of money for the sponsorship to get the actual contract but you have actually got to make it work. So it's like buying all the ingredients to make a cake but then you have actually got to put it together as a cake and get consumers to buy it...Leveraging sponsorships is critical...Leveraging a sponsorship is the most important thing (Sponsor 9, I + P)

As the purpose of this thesis is not focused upon specific type of leveraging activities, a brief overview of both common and disability sport specific leveraging activities is presented in Table 4.12 in order to aid in context creation.

Table 4.12: Leveraging Activities in Disability Sport Sponsorship Relationships

<i>Common leveraging activities</i>	<i>Leveraging activities related to Disability sport</i>
Naming rights to sport teams, events and fundraisers	Sponsor signage on prosthetic equipment
Placing signage in, around, or on sponsee	Disability sport specific activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic games to mimic environment experienced by athlete • Games of wheelchair basketball with staff
Endorsement through third party advocacy	
Social media communications	
Motivational talks by sponsees to sponsors, their clients or potential customers	
Hospitality activities	
Product give-away by sponsees	
Merchandise featuring sponsees	
Media coverage of events	
Athletes as ambassadors	

In the presence of **mission** and **target market** congruence, disability sport specific activities enabled fulfillment of sponsorship objectives such as engaging and motivating employees. Sponsees provided staff with “an understanding of why they were doing it... it was a real eye opener” (Sponsor 1: O + F/P). Moreover, these experiences were a tangible, non-classroom situation and helped to “enrich their day and made people feel good” (Sponsor 3, I + F) thus creating “a lot of positive energy throughout the business” (Sponsor 1, O + P/F). Subsequently, sponsorship relationships enabled employees to “pick up those transfer of excellence **values** into the job and increased productivity” (Sponsor 4, I + F).

The sponsorship objective of engaging and motivating employees, and related leveraging activities, was also facilitated through **overall** congruence when the sponsor and sponsee **stood for similar things**. This was achieved as,

The sponsee would express themselves and position themselves in a way that people would relate to... at the same time as competing in the world championships and holding their own. That sort of insight that people can relate to quite quickly... creates an association... The sponsee connected with colleagues (Sponsor 3, I +F).

In relation to disability sport, the sponsor went on to highlight that,

The sponsee was able to provide in a very accessible sort of way what the issue was with their amputation, the way they were born... The sponsee helped people understand how their performance stacked up against able-bodies... It was those little insights that enabled the light bulb to come on for people and suddenly disability sport wasn't at arm's length, it was a little bit closer (Sponsor 3, I + F).

Apart from the congruence micro-dimension of **mission** alignment, other micro-dimensions such as **functional**, **image**, **target market** and **value** congruence were evident in promotional activities. For example, Sponsor 2 (O + F) had “some [sponsee] athletes getting on the [service] and it was on the front page of the customer newsletter”. As such, this highlights congruence in a **functional** manner. Both **functional** and **image** congruence were found in product sponsorship relationships with one sponsor commenting that “physically the sponsee is a good looking guy and wears our product well and promotes it well” (Sponsor 10, I + P).

Interestingly, one of the larger organisational sponsorship relationships was adamant that during promotional activities, a “clash of brands” would not be created through placing the “sponsor as number one” as it is “the sponsee that we are promoting”. As a result, it was important for the brands to “fit well together” (Sponsor 6, O + F).

Reinforcing these findings short ranking tools two and three, particularly in terms of the strong results indicated by sponsors across **promotional activities** (see Table 4.11 and Table 4.8). Further confirmation was gained through document analysis where congruence was evident within articulation messages generated by the sponsorship relationships. For example, press releases express congruence through the creation of “synergies” between the sponsor and sponsee as a result of **mission** alignment. Similarly, where the sponsee had utilised a sponsor product, social media enabled communications that incorporated the congruence micro-dimensions of **functional** and **image**. For example, the sponsee would tweet how they had just eaten a sponsor’s product before training. Whereas other sponsees have blogged about how they used a sponsor’s product during a recent competition or training ride. As such, document analysis revealed the micro-dimensions of **functional**, **image**, **mission**, and **target market** congruence within media releases, websites, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

4.3.4.2. Case Study Discussion: Congruence in Sponsorship Implementation

The sponsorship management framework displays a number of interconnected stages found within sponsorship relationships (see Cornwell, 1995; Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Karg, 2007). While congruence has been demonstrated across sponsorship selection, strategy, and objectives, the purpose of congruence relates to communicating and creating links within the minds of target audiences (Cornwell *et*

al., 2006; Johar & Pham, 1999; Rifon *et al.*, 2004). As such, the findings of congruence within sponsorship implementation should not come as any surprise. Indeed, the findings are reflected by the vast majority of sponsorship literature that has examined sponsorship communication activities using the tool of congruence (Cornwell *et al.*, 2005). The innate knowledge demonstrated by sponsors to employ congruence in their communication activities makes sense according to Cornwell *et al.*, (2005). This is because good articulation messages have been shown to improve overall congruence perceptions by more than 30% thereby increasing effectiveness of the sponsorship medium (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011).

However, in the case of disability sport sponsorship relationships, findings suggested the micro-dimensions of **mission**, **functional**, **target market**, **values** and **image** were used to articulate overall congruence. As such, the majority of these dimensions are reflected in the study conducted by Zdravkovic *et al.* (2010). Contrastingly, Olson and Thjømmøe (2011) found that only **geographical**, **functional**, **target market**, **sponsorship duration** and **attitude similarity** can be used to positively increase overall fit perceptions.

Nevertheless, congruence enabled fulfillment of objectives such as increasing employee motivation through leveraging activities such as wheelchair basketball games. **Target market** and **value** congruence enabled staff insight into disabilities thus creating not only understanding but also positive and lasting **image** associations in the minds of employees. As the employees were exposed to further leveraging activities, further associations were created thereby implying that the role of congruence increased over time. As such, the applicability of both associative networks theory and schema theory becomes apparent in sponsorship leveraging activities. These speculations align with research conducted by Cornwell *et al.* (2005) who found articulation of sponsorship relationships may be beneficial for various stakeholders. Cornwell *et al.* (2005) suggested that articulation messages serve as a signal to the role and value of the sponsorship to the firm. The view by one sponsor that articulation messages avoided a “clash of brands” (Sponsor 6, O + F) indicated a desire to portray altruistic motives. Consequently, and along similar lines to theories within objectives of sponsorship relationships, it appears that the discounting principle is applicable as it suggested that given congruence, altruistic perceptions are created in the minds of consumers (Rifon *et al.*, 2004).

Furthermore, the findings suggested that congruence can be used to leverage the sponsorship relationship beyond levels that may not have been obtainable if congruence was absent. Research conducted by Alexander (2009) reflects this finding as semantic congruence heightened leveraging activities to build and redefine brand values to levels that may not have otherwise been expected. However, the findings here, and that of Alexander's (2009), are in contrast to Cliffe and Motion (2005) who reported an ability of the sponsor to leverage sponsorship outcomes, regardless of whether congruence existed between the sponsee and sponsor's brand. To a certain extent, Sponsor 8 (I + F) confirmed results by Cliffe and Motion (2005), as congruence did not play a major role in the relationships but the sponsorship produced positive client hospitality outcomes. Whether outcomes would have been improved in the face of congruence articulation messages remains to be seen.

4.3.5. Congruence in Sponsorship Measurement

Measurement of a sponsorship relationship assists in recognising sponsorship effectiveness thereby justifying a return on investment (Stotlar, 2004). The following section identifies measurement techniques, or lack thereof, in conjunction with associated rationales before exploring congruence within measurement of disability sport sponsorship relationships.

4.3.5.1. Case Study Findings: Congruence in Sponsorship Measurement

Sponsors indicated evaluation occurred when the activity was perceived as tangible and could thus be measured numerically. One sponsor saw evaluation as an opportunity to "look at how to utilise the sponsorship and the sponsee's services to best promote the sponsor" (Sponsor 1, O + P/F). However, a lack of sponsorship evaluation was prevalent across the majority of sponsorships, particularly if the sponsorship had philanthropic roots. Explanations for the lack of measurement revolved around the perceived hardship related to measurement of intangible objectives and how the outcomes of a sponsorship are very indirect. One sponsor noted that these difficulties are not specific to disability sport sponsorship relationships, rather, are a generic issue within sponsorship programs (Sponsor 3, I +F). The general consensus among sponsors was summarised in the comment,

It's very hard to identify the value isolated in a sponsorship... when there are a lot of other people in the business who are putting advertising programs that are a lot more quantifiable... Sponsorship is grey versus the hard black and white science of most advertising campaigns... you really need to have a strategic belief in it rather than black and white financial hurdles that might be applied to most other initiatives in the business (Sponsor 3, I +F).

Financial sponsors went on to contrast relevant disability-sporting sponsees with those of able-bodied sport sponsees contained in their sponsorship portfolio. It was suggested that able-bodied relationships naturally have more tangible benefits, such as media coverage, and thereby facilitates value isolation and measurement of the sponsorship relationship.

4.3.5.2. Case Study Discussions: Congruence in Sponsorship Measurement

Findings highlighted that the construct of congruence was not measured during sponsorship evaluation. One possible dimension that was inferred by two organisational / financial sponsors was **visibility** congruence. As a result of sponsorship evaluation, the sponsors realised a lack of **visibility** and hence sought to rectify the situation through placing logos on player's uniforms, increasing media promotion, and introducing naming rights into the sponsorship agreement. Consequently, the creation of the **visibility** micro-dimension as proposed by Zdravkovic et al. (2010) could be considered to be the result of sponsorship evaluation.

Previous findings and discussions have demonstrated the importance of congruence within sponsorship selection, strategy, objectives, and implementation. Given that existing tools are able to both measure and significantly predict overall congruence (see Appendix A), a lack of measurement within disability sponsorship relationships is of concern. For example, an audience profile analysis is one method to ensure continual **target market** congruence and is an evaluation technique that has existed in the sponsorship medium for over four decades (Meenaghan, 1983). Not only is it becoming increasingly necessary to measure congruence (Fleck & Quester, 2007) due to its importance in predicting sponsorship effects (Menon & Kahn 2003; Roy & Cornwell 2003) but also the significant role of congruence in disability sport sponsorship relationships suggested that evaluation of the construct should occur.

As per all cases, the seemingly intangible nature of sponsorships and related objectives created a perceived inability among sponsors to carry out measurement activities or gauge sponsorship success. This finding is reflected across a wide range of literature (Harvey, 2001; Horn, 1999; Cordeiro *et al.*, 2005) thus implying it is not unique to disability sport sponsorship relationships. This suggests that in disability sport sponsorships, evaluation still is “perhaps the greatest challenge faced by sponsors” (Copeland *et al.*, 1996, p. 45). Other reasons relating to a lack of measurement include how perhaps the sponsorship investment costs are so low that measurement is not worthwhile (Arthur *et al.*, 1998; McDonald, 1991).

As such, the lack of congruence implied sponsor perceptions of congruence still prominently exist at a global level rather than the relatively more tangible micro-dimensions. The findings have also highlighted the limited role congruence plays in sponsorship measurement. Hence, if sponsorship managers are to capitalise on congruence in their decision-making, they must be able to measure and compare congruence across a range of associations (Fleck & Quester, 2007).

4.3.6. Summary for Research Question Two

This section discussed the construct of congruence across each stage of the sponsorship management framework thereby reflecting the sub-research questions related to RQ2. Sponsors perceived and spoke of congruence in all stages bar sponsorship measurement. The interconnection between selection, strategy, objectives and implementation, meant that dimensions relating to specific sponsorship relationships also overlapped across sponsorship management. As such, management of disability sport sponsorship relationships was found to incorporate congruence as an overall, macro and micro-dimensional concept with particular relevance to each different type of sponsorship relationships.

4.4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Chapter four has provided findings and discussions relating to the two overarching research questions and associated sub-research questions for this thesis. For RQ1, findings extended previous literature to confirm not only the existence of congruence in disability sport sponsorship relationships but also the important role it plays in these relationships. Sponsors shed light on the construct of congruence at an overall, macro and micro-dimensional level. In this sense, the case reported here

reflected a significant number of dimensions currently existing in the literature as well as suggested refinement of **functional** congruence. Similar to the dimensions of congruence through **sponsorship duration**, sponsors proposed that congruence can also be created via **company duration**. As such, findings demonstrated that congruence in disability sponsorship relationships does not differ significantly in terms of specific dimensions from that of able-bodied sport sponsorship relationships. However, the emphasis placed upon various dimensions by sponsors was found to contrast with those suggested for able-bodied sport sponsees.

Findings and discussions relating to RQ2 built upon the first research question by operationilising the construct across the sport sponsorship management framework. On the whole, when dimensions were present in sponsorship strategy, the cyclical nature of sponsorship management saw the same dimensions repeated across the framework. Consequently, objectives stemming from sponsorship selection and strategy were found to influence leveraging activities that occurred during sponsorship implementation. Congruence in terms of **target market, mission, values, functional, portfolio** and **image** were all salient throughout these stages. However, a lack of both sponsorship measurement and measurement of congruence resulted in mainly anecdotal evaluation informing sponsors of sponsorship effects. As such, it appeared to be difficult for sponsorship managers to effectively determine whether the sponsorship had provided significant value to the organisation and whether congruence was utilised successfully.

In light of findings and related discussions, a summary of congruence in disability sport sponsorship will ensue in chapter five. Also found within the following chapter are implications of the findings as well as theoretical and practical recommendations, limitations and future research directions.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

As the final chapter of the current thesis, the focus of discussion revolves around significant outcomes and key implications generated from the research. To facilitate this, the chapter is divided into five sections and begins with a summary of the two major research questions. Following these summaries and implications, limitations related to the study will be highlighted along with a presentation of future research opportunities before concluding remarks are provided.

5.1. FINDINGS

As a result of an extensive examination of major and sub-research questions in chapter four, the purpose of considering the findings in a concise manner within this chapter permits suggestions relating to theoretical and practical implications.

5.1.1. Findings for Research Question One

RQ1 focused on exploring and extending existing research on congruence in disability sport sponsorship relationships. A summary of key congruence findings is presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Summary of Congruence Findings for Research Question One

<i>Macro-Dimensions</i>	<i>Micro-Dimensions</i>	<i>Sponsorship Relationship Type Where Congruence Prominent</i>
Marketing strategy	Geographical	Financial
	Local attributes	Financial
	Portfolio	Organisational, individual, financial
	Promotional activities	All types
	Target market or audience similarities	Organisational, financial
	Visibility	Organisational, financial
Logical connection / makes sense	Company duration	Organisational, financial
	Functional	Organisational, individual, financial, product
	Image	Individual, financial, service, product
	Time duration of sponsorship relationship	Financial
Stand for similar things	Culture, principles, or philosophies	Organisational, financial
	Mission or goals	Organisational, financial
	Values	Individual, financial, product

In conjunction with Table 5.1, summaries of key findings that address RQ1 are as follows:

1. When expressing overall congruence, the tendency of sponsors to utilise the term fit suggested it was the most widely understood terminology. Moreover, as congruence played a role in nine out of ten disability sport sponsorship relationships, including one with philanthropic origins, it was crucial for these relationships to establish how the sponsor and sponsee **stand for similar things**.
2. Sponsors suggested the macro and micro-dimensions found in Table 5.1 are more applicable to disability sport sponsorship relationships given the relatively low **visibility** of Paralympians within society compared to able-bodied counterparts.
3. Dimensions of congruence were not found to significantly differ in disability sport sponsorship relationships when compared with existing literature. Rather, findings uncovered a shift in how dimensions are emphasised within these relationships.
4. Findings indicated that disability sport sponsorship relationships incorporated, on average, less dimensions when compared with able-bodied sport sponsees.
5. Findings suggested financial relationships place importance upon **time duration of sponsorship relationships** and company longevity (i.e. **duration**) to ensure associations and schemas are formed in the minds of stakeholders. As such, sponsors referenced schema theory and the associative networks principle (Koo et al., 2006; Rogers, 2003).
6. The salience of shared **values** in product sponsorship relationships indicated that sponsors considered authenticity to be important, which thereby facilitated effective third-party advocacy endorsements by the sponsees.
7. **Target market** congruence in organisational relationships occurred in a twofold manner through either **audience similarities** across the dyad or saw sponsees relating specifically to **target markets** of the sponsor.
8. Findings indicated support for Poon and Prendergast (2006) to broaden the current restrictive definition associated with **functional** congruence.
9. **Portfolio** congruence was deemed to be necessary to protect and promote brand reputations due to current environments where CSR, equal opportunity, and diversity all hold sway within our politically correct society.

5.1.2. Findings for Research Question Two

RQ2 considered congruence across each stage of the sponsorship management framework. Beginning with sponsorship selection, organisational sponsorships sought sponsees where **target market, geographical, portfolio, image, mission and goal** congruence could be established. As such, these dimensions allowed for **alignment with company strategy and objectives**, given incorporation of **portfolio** congruence, thereby impacting specific leveraging activities.

Contrastingly, individual relationships were selected and integrated into sponsorship strategy mainly based on personality congruence given shared **values** existed between the sponsee and the sponsor or brand. However, findings uncovered **local attributes** as a deciding selection factor in one philanthropically oriented individual relationship. Similarly, **value** alignment, along with **image** and **functional** congruence, played a role in product sponsorship selection, strategy and objectives, with the intent of aiding subsequent leveraging activities. This is compared with the service sponsorship relationship where selection was grounded in overall brand congruence to enable a brand ambassador strategy. Notably, congruence in sponsorship strategy and objectives did not play a major role in philanthropically orientated sponsorships thereby highlighting the importance of establishing the type of sponsorship using tools such as Austin's (2000) CCI continuum.

Although measurement of congruence has been achieved in research domains (Olson & Thjømøe, 2011), the case reported here demonstrated a lack of congruence and formal sponsorship measurement. As such, it is suggested that perceptions of congruence are still firmly rooted in the relatively more intangible overall congruence construct and related objectives. This was despite congruence dimensions emphasised across all previous stages of the framework.

A summary of macro and micro-congruence dimensions associated with each stage of the framework, in relation to organisational and individual sponsorships, is found in Table 5.2. Financial and product sponsorship relationships can be viewed through combining both individual and organisational relationships. Moreover, as the service sponsorship relationship simply demonstrated overall congruence through a brand ambassador strategy, it was not included in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Summary of Main Congruence Findings for Research Question Two

<i>Macro-Dimensions</i>	<i>Micro-Dimensions</i>	Stage of Sponsorship Management Framework Where Congruence Dimension is Prominent	
		<i>Organisations</i>	<i>Individuals</i>
Marketing strategy	Alignment with company strategy	Strategy	
	Alignment with company objectives	Strategy	
	Geographical	Selection	
	Local attributes	Selection, strategy, implementation	Selection
	Portfolio	Selection, strategy, objectives	
	Promotional activities	Implementation	Strategy, implementation
	Target market or audience similarities	Selection, strategy, objectives, implementation	
	Visibility	Implied in measurement	
Logical connection / makes sense	Functional	Objectives, implementation	
	Image	Selection, objectives, implementation	Selection, objectives, implementation
Stand for similar things	Culture, principles, or philosophies	Selection, strategy, objectives	
	Mission or goals	Selection, strategy, objectives, implementation	
	Values	Objectives, implementation	Selection, strategy, objectives, implementation

Given the dimensions found in Table 5.2, findings uncovered major objectives and leveraging activities of disability sport sponsorship relationships. As such, Table 5.3 is of practical assistance to the management of disability sport sponsorship relationships and was deemed an appropriate inclusion.

Table 5.3: Major Objectives and Leveraging Activities for Disability Sport Sponsors

Type of Sponsorship Relationship	Major Objectives	Major Leveraging Activities
<i>Organisational</i>	Community involvement, engage/motivate staff, brand awareness & health, corporate image	Wheelchair basketball/ rugby, naming rights, logo/brand utilisation, third-party advocacy
<i>Individual</i>	Community involvement, engage/motivate staff	Athlete interaction with staff, clients, customers through talks, blogs, social media. Third-party advocacy
<i>Financial</i>	Community involvement, engage/motivate staff	See organisational and individual
<i>Service</i>	Brand awareness & health	Athlete appearances, use of logo
<i>Product</i>	Brand awareness & health, corporate image	Use of product, promotion/third-party advocacy of product, social media

As a result of findings, the conceptual framework established in chapter two was found to reflect and encompass the concepts and constructs discussed. Consequently, research contributions stemming from the findings will now be presented and is followed by future research directions.

5.2. RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

5.2.1. Theoretical Implications

As a result of the research findings and discussions, a wide array of theoretical contributions has been demonstrated. Firstly, the current study has simultaneously extended existing contexts of congruence into a new domain as well as demonstrated the presence of congruence across multiple types of disability sport sponsorship relationships. This was facilitated through Austin's (2000) CCI continuum, which was deemed to be an appropriate vehicle to generate research outcomes, despite the

fact it was not expressly part of the research questions. Significantly, findings suggested the importance of congruence in these sponsorship relationships regardless of firmly entrenched population schemas relating to notions such as wheelchairs.

Further, the research has provided external validity for previously identified dimensions of congruence previously developed through homogenous student populations. Findings also demonstrated support for calls to modify the current definition of **functional** congruence (for definition see Appendix A). As Poon and Prendergast (2006) suggested, the **functional** congruence definitions need to incorporate situations where the sponsor's product is not used during the event but either facilitates or contributes to sporting outcomes (Poon & Prendergast, 2006). While **company duration** has been alluded to in literature (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004), findings identified **company duration** as a specific dimension of congruence. Consequently, not only have specific dimensions undergone external validation but findings also suggested potential dimensions further requiring internal validation.

Lastly, findings have significantly contributed to the operationilisation of congruence through identifying the role of the construct across each stage of the sponsorship management framework. It is recognised that overall, macro, and micro-dimensions of congruence, as well as the sponsorship framework are not new concepts and firmly grounded in existing literature. However, the examination of the construct across each framework stage, along with the specific distributions of congruence dimensions, was unique to this study. As such, the research was able to provide a holistic view of how congruence can be leveraged and understood within dyadic sponsorship relationships thereby resulting in key practical implications for sponsors, sponsees and disability sport sponsorship relationships.

5.2.2. Practical Implications and Recommendations

When leveraging a disability sport sponsorship relationship, findings supported the notion that sponsors are open to the approach of placing the sponsee brand first to ensure that perceptions of **image**, and **overall** congruence, are created. As such, a clash of brands and egoistic sponsorship motivations perceptions are potentially minimised. However, unless the sponsor operates in niche sport markets where an irreverent brand **image** may be appropriate, the requirement for a spotless

image is required for sponsees looking to engage and maintain sponsorship relationships, in line with remarks made by Thwaites et al. (1999).

In individual sponsorship relationships, the significance of the sponsee embodying **value** congruence with the sponsor's brand, as well as sponsor managers themselves, was clearly evident within findings relating to RQ1 and RQ2. Consequently, congruent **values** not only aided selection of the sponsee but also facilitated internal organisational connections. These internal connections were the result of individuals being able to relate to the sponsee and coming to conclusions that having a disability is almost a non-barrier. Ironically, to ensure the delivery of objectives such as motivating employees, the sponsee simultaneously needed to be perceived as inspirational through their athletic feats and overcoming adversity. Consequently, demonstrating an ability to triumph in the face of hardships still appears to be a unique leveraging opportunity for sponsees to solicit sponsorship agreements. Sponsors suggested sponsees achieved this through highlighting how their pursuits and stories of achievement were greater than Olympians because of what they have had to overcome. Further, approaching sponsorship relationships in an upfront manner regarding disabilities to 'get the elephant out of the room', highlights how authenticity **value** congruence can be created by the sponsee in order to build relationships with sponsors.

Visibility congruence, as reflected from the sponsor, holds implications in financial sponsorship relationships where the price had to be right and fit the sponsee. This was in light of comparing Paralympic athletes with their counterparts on the Olympic team; Paralympic athletes were under-indexed in terms of their **relevance** and **awareness** to the general population. However, through understanding that disability sponsees offer sponsors the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of diversity, sponsors are able to leverage this ability and establish perceptions of CSR in the minds of consumers. This was seen to be advantageous, particularly in larger organisations that focus on equal opportunity within their CSR activities. Moreover, major companies need to take advantage of congruence between human resource objectives, brand **values**, and Paralympic sponsees, as generally they reflect and are parallel to what the Paralympics stands for.

The perceived lack of disability sport sponsorship relationships provide for a unique sponsorship ground for organisations. This opportunity is present as the landscape is relatively uncluttered compared with other sponsorship domains, such as

the Olympics, which is beginning to experience the constraints and liabilities of a cluttered environment (Seguin *et al.*, 2008; Tripodi, 2001). As such, disability sport sponsorships represent an effective communication tool for sponsors given congruence can be established. In this light, when sponsees are approaching sponsors, they need to highlight how they will be congruent with the sponsor instead of approaching sponsorship managers with generic proposals.

It is suggested that sponsorship selection, strategy, objectives, and implementation be based upon congruence dimensions found in Table 5.2. Given these dimensions, Table 5.3 enables sponsors and sponsees to identify pertinent objectives and unique leveraging activities in disability sport sponsorship relationships. However, these findings are by no means exhaustive. Rather, the findings should be viewed as a guide for disability sport sponsorship relationships.

As a result of the research, and importance of congruence in determining sponsorship effectiveness (Cornwell *et al.*, 2006), it is suggested sponsees promote both congruence and the sponsor at every opportunity. Moreover, sponsorship managers need to utilise existing knowledge of congruence dimensions (e.g., Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010) to facilitate an ability to efficiently manage sponsorship relationships.

5.3. LIMITATIONS

While the appropriateness of employing a case study methodology was established in chapter three, findings and implications associated with the research need to be considered in light of a few limitations. The qualitative case study methodology and small sample size restricts broader generalisability of findings (Farrelly *et al.*, 2006; Stake, 1995), both within and beyond a disability sport sponsorship context. Moreover, the short ranking tools were not measurement sound in terms of context, pilot testing, item randomisation, or generalisability, thereby potentially producing bias. Nevertheless, the breadth and depth created through consistent themes, data triangulation, ranking tools grounded in literature with the aim of purely reinforcing findings, as well as sponsors representing a myriad of different relationships, made the case study methodology ideal to help uncover relevant and applicable findings. As such, the treatment of findings as exemplars as opposed to generalisations has been the approach taken by this thesis.

A further limitation to the study was the timeframe of the honours research project. The completion of the thesis within a seven-month period constricted the depth and number of case studies to ten sponsorship relationships. Consequently, the sample was based geographically on sponsorship relationships found in Sydney and Melbourne thereby resulting in selection bias that excluded other states or territories. Moreover, the sample did not include a pure commercial sponsorship relationship where sponsors are motivated by sales, promotion and advertising, and expect mainly tangible rewards (Austin, 2000). This may have influenced findings of congruence within disability sport sponsorship relationships, particularly within the stage of sponsorship measurement. Given a potential increase in sponsorship spend, it is possible that perceptions of value creation achieved through evaluation techniques would be worth the commitment needed to measure sponsorship effectiveness and congruence. However, the sponsorship relationships investigated demonstrated elements of commercial sponsorships due to the nature of Austin's (2000) continuum. Moreover, sponsors represented local, state, and national disability sport sponsorship agreements, thereby ensuring that a comprehensive picture of the Australian disability sport sponsorship landscape was incorporated into the current thesis.

Similarly, time constraints dictated that discrepancies between qualitative and quantitative data could not be investigated. It is also appropriate to note that the possibility of participant and researcher bias existed thereby limiting findings and views opined by sponsors. However, as detailed in chapter three, the data collection method of interviews, locations chosen by participants, short-ranking tools, in conjunction with document analysis, all acted to minimise bias contained when research findings were presented. Consequently, the study has explored and detailed congruence within disability sport sponsorship relationships but requires further quantitative research to confirm the findings thereby allowing a capacity to make predictions with a high degree of confidence.

5.4. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Given the scarcity of literature relating to disability sport and disability sport sponsorship, the necessity and applicability of a qualitative exploratory study is naturally apparent. It also suggests the untapped potential for numerous future research directions, a belief that is reflected by Burton (2010). First, while findings provided external validity for existing congruence dimensions, further validation of

these dimensions within the disability sport sponsorship context in a quantitative manner is suggested. Quantitative research should also include the proposed additional congruence dimensions of **culture, goals, company duration** and **values**. Second, it is recommended that this occur not only from a sponsor perspective but also from a consumer and sponsee viewpoint to triangulate the research further. As Turner et al. (2010) highlighted, simultaneous research taken from these dyadic relationships, with possible extension to a triadic perspective, that compares opinions of congruence in sponsorship relationships would add value to the current understanding of sport sponsorship. This would shed light on the discrepancies and trends found within the existing study as well as broaden research into commercially orientated sport sponsorship relationships, as suggested by Cornwell (2008).

Value for disability sport sponsees would also be created through modeling congruence, with the impact of congruence as a moderator or mediator, and differentially represented across the sponsorship management framework. Given the ease of use and understanding of the framework, future researchers could test empirically the distributions of congruence presented in this thesis. Moreover, it would be worthwhile investigating whether congruence, and associated dimensions, is an antecedent to the willingness of sponsorship managers' to enter into sponsorship relationships. Additionally, this avenue could also include sponsorship managers' willingness to continue the sponsorship relationship during the stage of sponsorship renewal. Results would illuminate how congruence aids brand equity, given this is built over time (Aaker, 2004).

The scope of the research and honours timeframe delimited this thesis to congruence and disability sport sponsorships. As such, comments made by sponsors during data collection indicated congruence was employed for different purposes in able-bodied sport sponsorships compared with disability sport sponsorships. Potential exists for future researchers to explore this subject directly when sponsors incorporate both disability and able-bodied sport sponsees in their portfolio thereby permitting further comparisons and contrast to occur.

5.5. CONCLUSION

This study has explored the theoretical concept of congruence across disability sport sponsorship relationships. A framework developed through the literature review, highlighted relevant aspects of the construct needed to explore both the concept itself as well as management of sponsorships. Subsequently, the adoption of a case study methodology bound by sponsor perceptions of disability sport sponsorships saw a focus upon individual and organisational sponsorships, as well as various financial, product, and service relationships. Triangulation and reinforcement of qualitative findings occurred through three short ranking tools and document analysis.

While findings regarding both overall congruence and congruence dimensions were reflected by literature, unique value and contributions were created through operationalisation of the construct across each stage of the sponsorship management framework. Moreover, the significance of including individual sport sponsorship relationships needs to be noted due to the tendency of research to focus upon congruence in an organisational sponsorship relationship setting.

In the disability sport sponsorship case reported here, findings illustrated specific relevance of certain congruence dimensions to different relationship types and how these dimensions link together selection, strategy, objectives and implementation. Overall, nine out of ten sponsors emphasised the importance of the construct within their respective relationships and clearly identified that congruence does indeed play a role in disability sport sponsorship relationships. Additional research contributions were achieved using the CCI continuum, which enabled the role and importance of congruence to be further distinguished across organisations involved in the case study. While all relationships were termed 'sponsorships', the variation in motivations and expectations resulted in differing roles of congruence in philanthropic, socio-sponsorships, and sponsorships with commercial elements.

Overall, findings and recommendations will aid disability sport sponsees to attract and maintain corporate support. Similarly, outcomes provide sponsorship managers with a greater ability to efficiently select and manage disability sport sponsees in alignment with respective sponsorship strategies and objectives. However, the need for these relationships to establish measures for both congruence and overall sponsorship is pivotal due to the severe scrutiny placed upon sport sponsorships in the current era of financial uncertainty.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: MACRO AND MICRO DIMENSIONS OF CONGRUENCE

<i>Macro-Dimensions</i>	<i>Micro-Dimensions</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Additional Authors</i>
Logical Connection		There is a logical connection between the sponsor and sponsee.	It is logical that Ripcurl sponsor surfing.	Olson, 2010; Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011; Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006; Speed & Thompson, 2000	
Stand for Similar Things		The sponsor and sponsee stand for similar things.	The Australian Olympic Committee and the Australian Sports Commission both stand for delivering sporting excellence.		
Makes Sense		It makes sense that the sponsee is sponsored by the sponsor.	It makes sense that the Australian Wallabies are sponsored by Qantas.		
Expectancy		“The degree to which an item or information falls into a pre-determined schema or a structure evoked by the theme” (Fleck & Quester, 2007, pg. 976).	It was predictable that Shell sponsored the Formula 1 racing.	Fleck & Quester, 2007	Similar to 'time duration' found in Olson & Thjømmøe (2011)
Relevancy		“The degree to which the information contained in the stimulus favours (or hinders) the identification of the theme or message being communicated” (Fleck & Quester, 2007, pg. 976).	That Speedo sponsors Swimming Australia tells me something about the company.		

<i>Macro-Dimensions</i>	<i>Micro-Dimensions</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Additional Authors</i>
Prominence	Visibility of Relationship	The extent to which the promotion prominently features support for the sponsee.	A small ribbon in the corner of the ad vs. a large ribbon in the middle of the ad.	Zdravkovic <i>et al.</i> , 2010	
	Relationship Explicitness	The extent to which the nature of the partnership (degree of support) is spelled out to consumers in the ad.	Mount Franklin will donate \$290,000 to McGrath Foundation.	Zdravkovic <i>et al.</i> , 2010	
	Local Attributes	The extent to which the sponsee is affiliated with the local market.	Local IGA supporting local sporting club.	Zdravkovic <i>et al.</i> , 2010	
	Active Involvement	The extent to which support of the sponsee is determined by the actions of the consumer.	Yoplait yogurt “Save lids to save lives” campaign.	Zdravkovic <i>et al.</i> , 2010	
	Visual/Colour	The extent to which the visual presentation and colours of the sponsor and the sponsee overlap with each other.	M&M using pink candies and packaging marked with pink ribbons when supporting McGrath Foundation.	Zdravkovic <i>et al.</i> , 2010	
Marketing Strategy	Target market or audience similarity	The extent to which the sponsor’s and the sponsee’s target markets overlap.	Gatorade and the Australian Institute of Sport (both targeting active individuals).	Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011; Zdravkovic <i>et al.</i> , 2010	Similar to suggestions by Cornwell <i>et al.</i> (2006), Howard & Crompton (2004)
	Promotional activities	The extent to which the sponsor’s promotional activities also encourage support for the sponsee.	Asics promoting Melbourne Marathon (Melbourne marathon event supports two different charities).	Zdravkovic <i>et al.</i> , 2010	
	Geographical	The extent to which the sponsor and the sponsee have ties to the same geographic area.	Metlink sponsoring Melbourne Heart Football Club.	Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011; Zdravkovic <i>et al.</i> , 2010	

<i>Macro-Dimensions</i>	<i>Micro-Dimensions</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Additional Authors</i>
Marketing Strategy	Slogan	The extent to which the promotional slogan simultaneously supports the sponsor and the sponsee.	“Support the girls” – slogan by bra company supporting a female fun run.	Zdravkovic <i>et al.</i> , 2010	
	Mission	The extent to which the overall mission of the sponsor is aligned with the mission of the sponsee.	Lean Cuisine and Dieticians of Australia both have healthy living as their mission.	Zdravkovic <i>et al.</i> , 2010	
Prominence of Sponsor and Sponsee	Organisation Size	The sponsee and sponsor are both prominent or not prominent.	McDonalds and the International Olympic Committee are international companies found all around the world.	Olson & Thjømøe, 2011	Similar to prominence heuristic tested by Johar & Pham (1999)
	Organisation Importance		Rolex and Golf can have far more market influence than their market share would suggest due to aspects such as status or innovation.	Olson & Thjømøe, 2011	
	Functional (use of sponsor product by participants)	Use of sponsor’s products during a game either directly or indirectly.	Athletes’ use of athletic shoes or sports drink during the event.	Gwinner, 1997; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Howard & Crompton, 2004; Olson & Thjømøe, 2011	Similar to 'natural fit' found in Simmons & Becker-Olsen (2002) and 'direct' product relevance found in McDaniel (1991)
	Functional (use by sponsor product by audience)	Use of sponsor’s products during a game either directly or indirectly.	Spectators drinking beer while watching game.		

<i>Macro-Dimensions</i>	<i>Micro-Dimensions</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Additional Authors</i>
	Image	Similar meaning or image of both the sponsor and sponsee; “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory... An image link may be formed through brand/product experiences, brand/product attributes, price information, positioning in promotional communications, packaging, user imagery, or usage occasion” (Keller, 1993, p. 3-4).	Pal dog foods and the Humane Society.	Gwinner, 1997; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Howard & Crompton, 2004; Olson & Thjømøe, 2011; Speed & Thompson, 2000	Same as 'indirect' product relevance found in McDaniel (1991)
	Time Duration of Sponsorship	Duration of the actual sponsorship relationship.	Unhealthy' beer brands fit well with 'healthy' sports because of their long time sponsorship link with the object.	Olson & Thjømøe, 2011	Similar to 'expectancy' found in Fleck & Quester (2007)
	Portfolio Relatedness	Categorical relatedness between sponsorships within a sponsor's portfolio.	Inclusion of sponsees across sport, music, arts, indigenous, and disability.	Chien <i>et al.</i> (2011)	

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

STAGE ONE –PROFILE AND BACKGROUND (APPROX 5-10 MINS)
<p>Introduction Introduce study, reinforce confidentiality, brief overview of interview.</p> <p>Participant profile Position, title, length of time working in current position.</p> <p>Participant background Brief overview of how participant came to be working in current position.</p>
STAGE TWO – BROAD INITIAL QUESTIONS (APPROX 10-20 MINS)
<p>Role of sponsorship within organisation What role does sponsorship play at your organisation? OR How do you perceive the sponsorship culture at your organisation? In your opinion, what differentiates sponsorship from other marketing tools? Can you specifically relate this to the sponsee?</p> <p>Sponsorship management approach What is your approach to the management of sponsorship relationships? Can you please describe your organisation’s relationship with the sponsee?</p> <p>Word Association Tool What are five words you would use to describe your organisation? Why have you chosen these specific words? What are five words you would use to describe the sponsee? Why have you chosen these specific words?</p>
STAGE THREE – CONGRUENCE WITHIN SPONSORSHIP MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK (APPROX 20-30 MINS)
<p>Sponsorship selection and associated reasons In your perspective, what were the motivators for entering into a sponsorship relationship with the sponsee? Why did you select the particular sponsee? [Completion of short ranking tool one by participant] In your perspective, what objectives do you look to achieve as a result of the sponsorship relationship with the sponsee? [Completion of short ranking tool two by participant] Do you leverage the sponsorship relationship in any way? Is there any evaluation techniques used to determine the effectiveness of the sponsorship relationship? Why or why not? Is this an important part of your approach to sponsorship management?</p>
STAGE FOUR – IMPINGEMENT FACTORS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS (APPROX 15-20 MINS)
<p>Impingement factors Are there any factors that impinge or impede your relationship with the sponsee?</p> <p>Future directions In what direction do you feel the sponsorship relationship will head in the future?</p> <p>Other comments Is there anything else you feel would add value to this conversation? <i>If congruence has not been mentioned, prompt with:</i> Do you feel fit plays a role within the sponsorship relationship with the sponsee? [Completion of short ranking tool three by participant] Thank participant for time and contributions; welcome opportunity for participant to receive an overview of the research findings.</p>

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



<Date>

Dear <Name>,

RE: Honours Research Project – An exploratory case study on congruence in disability sport sponsorship relationships.

I am an Honours student in the Sport Management Program at Deakin University and the above issue is the basis of my research thesis. I am particularly interested in understanding disability sport properties including sponsors approaches to sponsorship management. My research will involve a series of interviews with sponsorship decision makers involved in disability sport sponsorship relationships. As such, I invite you to participate in this process. In order to do this, I ask if you could reply to me through the email address found below. We can then arrange a time at your convenience to discuss the research and your potential involvement in more detail.

If you were to participate, it would be necessary to conduct an interview for around forty-five to ninety minutes. This will help ensure that expert, relevant opinions are collected in regard to disability sport sponsorships. Specifically, it will be the sponsorship relationship with the sponsee that will be explored and discussed.

Confidentiality is assured throughout the research process and is governed by the strict guidelines of Deakin University. This ensures the privacy of individuals, the organisation and any specific details will be maintained in the presentation of any findings. You are also welcome to withdraw from the process at any stage at which time all data collected as part of your participation will be removed from the research study.

I hope my findings will make a contribution to forming a view of the important role played by disability sport sponsorships and create an understanding of these critical partnerships found within Australian society. During and at the conclusion of the project, I welcome the opportunity to present you with a copy of my final findings. I thank you for your time so far. I will follow up with you by phone in approximately a week to ensure that you have received the invitation to participate in the study and discuss your potential involvement.

Yours sincerely,
<Signed>

Hannah Macdougall
Honours Student
Bowater School of Management and Marketing
Deakin University
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood, VIC
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Supervisors Details

Dr Sheila Nguyen
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APPENDIX D: SPONSORSHIP PROFILES

<i>Sponsor</i>	<i>Type of Sponsorship</i>	<i>Sponsee</i>	<i>Sponsor Business Size*</i>	<i>Title of Interviewee</i>	<i>Length of Relationship</i>	<i>Contract and Term</i>	<i>Continuous</i>
Sponsor 1	Product then financial	Organisation	Small	Manager: Business Dev. & Marketing	In 7 th year	Formal, written 3 year agreement	Yes
Sponsor 2	Financial	Organisation	Large	Marketing Manager	In 5 th year	Formal, written, annual agreement	Yes
Sponsor 3	Financial	Individual	Large	Strategy Manager	1 year	Formal, written, annual agreement	No – acquisition of company
Sponsor 4	Financial	Organisation	Large	National Sponsorship Manager	8 years	Formal, written agreement	No – athlete retirement
Sponsor 5	Financial	Organisation	Medium	Director	In 4 th year	Formal, written, annual agreement	Yes
Sponsor 6	Financial	Organisation	Large	Executive Manager	In 2 nd year	Formal, written, annual agreement	Yes
Sponsor 7	Service	Individual	Large	Brand Manager	In 3 rd year	Agreement as part of a wider sponsorship	Yes
Sponsor 8	Financial	Individual	Small/Medium	Managing Director	4 years	Initial written agreement, progressed to email agreement	No – company downsizing, possibility of athlete retirement
Sponsor 9	Product	Individual	Medium	Marketing Manager	In 1 st year	Formal, written annual agreement	Yes
Sponsor 10	Product	Individual	Large	Marketing Manager	In 3 rd year	Handshake agreement	Yes

* Based on ABS (2002) classification where Small < 20 people; 20 < Medium < 200; Large > 200 people

APPENDIX E: PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT



TO:

Plain Language Statement

Date:

Full Project Title: *'Game, set, match'*. An exploratory case study on congruence in disability sport sponsorship relationships.

Principle Researchers: Dr Sheila Nguyen and Adam Karg

Student Researcher: Hannah Macdougall

You are invited to take part in this research project. Participation in any research project is voluntary. **If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to.** Deciding not to participate will not affect your relationship to the researchers or to Deakin University. Once you have read this form and agree to participate, please sign the attached consent form. You may keep this copy of the Plain Language Statement.

The purpose of this research is to explore how disability sport sponsorships are managed. Specifically, the research seeks to gain insight into the potential role of congruence between disability sporting properties and the respective sponsors. The collated views of participants will be published in an honours thesis, journal papers and academic journals. No individual will be able to be identified in any publication. The possible benefits of the study include developing further understanding of sponsorship management within disability sporting organisations.

With your consent, your participation in the project will involve an interview of approximately 45 to 90 minutes. You may of course decide to stop the interview at any point. You may also ask up to the time of publication that any information collected at your interview be destroyed and not used for the research. The following are two example interview questions that may be asked within the interview:

- 1: What role does sponsorship play in your organisation?
- 2: Please explain to me how the sponsorship relationship is managed?

We wish to voice record the interview and take handwritten notes. If you do not wish this to occur, we will only take handwritten notes of the interview. All data will be stored securely for a period of a minimum of six years after final publication. It will then be destroyed.

Once the research project is completed your organisation will be provided the opportunity to receive a copy of the honours thesis resulting from the study or an overview of the findings (with an option to receive further publications if you wish).

Approval to undertake this research project has been given by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Deakin University. If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact: The Manager, Office of Research Integrity, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: 9251 7129, Facsimile: 9244 6581; research-ethics@deakin.edu.au

If you require further information or if you have any problems concerning this project, you can contact either of the principal researchers. The researchers responsible for this project are:

Student Researcher:

Hannah Macdougall
Honours student
Deakin University
hkma@deakin.edu.au

Co-Supervisor:

Dr Sheila Nguyen
Lecturer
Deakin University
sheila.nguyen@deakin.edu.au

Co-Supervisor:

Adam Karg
Lecturer
Deakin University
adam.karg@deakin.edu.au

APPENDIX F: PART A - CONSENT FORM

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
INDIVIDUAL CONSENT FORM



TO:

Consent Form - Individual

Date:

Full Project Title: 'Game, set, match'. An exploratory case study on congruence in disability sport sponsorship relationships.

I have read and understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I freely agree to participate in this project according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement.

I give my permission for the interview to be audio taped.

I have been given a copy of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal my identity and personal details, including when information about this project is published, or presented in any public form.

Participant's Name (printed)

.....

Signature Date

Researchers Details

Hannah Macdougall
Honours Student
Deakin University
hkma@deakin.edu.au

Dr Sheila Nguyen
Lecturer
Deakin University
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Adam Karg
Lecturer
Deakin University
adam.karg@deakin.edu.au

PART B - REVOCATION OF CONSENT FORM

**DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
REVOCATION OF CONSENT FORM**



TO:

Revocation of Consent Form

(To be used for participants who wish to withdraw from the project)

Date:

Full Project Title: *'Game, set, match'*. An exploratory case study on congruence in disability sport sponsorship relationships.

I hereby wish to WITHDRAW my consent to participate in the above research project and understand that such withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardise my relationship with Deakin University.

Participant's Name (printed)

Signature Date

Please mail this form to:

Adam Karg
School of Management and Marketing,
Deakin University
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC 3125
+61 3 924 46934
adam.karg@deakin.edu.au

APPENDIX G: COPY OF BLANK PROMO FORMA TEMPLATE

THE ROLE OF CONGRUENCE	
Does it play a role? What is the importance of the role? How does it play a role? Has the role changed over time? Specific terminology used by sponsor:	
OVERALL, MACRO AND MICRO CONGRUENCE	
Use by sponsee Use by audience Organisation size Organisation importance Target market Geographical Image Visibility Explicitness Local attributes Visual/colour Explicitness Promotional activities Mission Time duration of sponsorship Portfolio	
Overall congruence: Logical connection Stand for similar things Makes sense	
Other (e.g. symbolic):	
ADDITIONAL CONGRUENCE INFORMATION	
Incongruence / lack of congruence Congruence in able-bodied relationships	
CONGRUENCE ACROSS SPONSORSHIP MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK	
Strategy and planning Objective setting Selection Implementation Measurement and evaluation	

APPENDIX H: SHORT RANKING TOOL ONE – MOTIVATORS OF THE SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIP

Please rate the importance of the motivators below in terms of the sponsorship relationship with the sponsored sponsee.

(e.g., this motivator played an important role in the sponsorship relationship)

MOTIVATORS	(1=not very important, 7=very important)						
Sponsorship aligns with company strategy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sponsorship aligns with corporate objectives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tangible benefits (e.g., increased sales, financial gains, advertising space)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Intangible benefits (e.g., image, awareness, reputation, networks, brand equity, competitive advantage, socially responsible)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(Adapted from: Amis et al., 1999; Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Berrett & Slack, 1999; Farrelly, Quester & Burton, 1997; Irwin & Amisakopoulos, 1992; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007)

APPENDIX I: SHORT RANKING TOOL TWO – OBJECTIVES OF THE SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIP

Rate the importance of the objectives below in terms of the sponsorship relationship
with the sponsored sponsee

(e.g., this objective played a big role in the sponsorship relationship)

OBJECTIVES	(1=not very important, 7=very important)						
Establish/increase brand awareness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Improve brand health/perception	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Increase sales/market share	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Communicate with specific target markets	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gain media exposure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Engage and motivate employees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Enhance client relations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Enhance corporate image/leverage corporate reputation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Community involvement/promote corporate citizenship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(Adapted from: Copeland et al., 1996; Cordeiro et al., 2005; Cornwell, 1995; Desbordes et al., 2004; Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992; Javalgi et al., 1994; Meenaghan, 1983; Seitanidi & Ryan, 2007; Stotlar, 2004)

APPENDIX J: SHORT RANKING TOOL THREE – ELEMENTS OF SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIP

Rate the importance of the elements below in terms of the sponsorship relationship

(e.g., to what extent do you think there was an alignment between the sponsor and sponsee regarding the following?)

ELEMENT	(1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)						
Target Market of sponsor and sponsee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Image of sponsor and sponsee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Use of sponsor product / service by sponsee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Culture of sponsor and sponsee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Visibility of sponsor and sponsee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Geographic locations of sponsor and sponsee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Company mission of sponsor and sponsee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Promotional activities of sponsor and sponsee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(Adapted from Arthur et al., 1998; Chien et al., 2011; Cordeiro et al., 2005; Cornwell, 1995; Fahy et al., 2004; Gwinner, 1997; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Howard & Crompton, 2004; Keller, 1993; Meenaghan, 1983; Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011; Speed & Thompson, 2000; Zdravkovic et al., 2010)

APPENDIX K: NVIVO CODES USED IN DATA ANALYSIS

First Stage Coding	Second Stage Coding
Congruence	Existence of congruence in disability sport sponsorship Overall congruence Dimensions of congruence Additional dimensions Incongruence Congruence in able-bodied sponsorship compared with disability sport sponsorships
Sport Sponsorship Management Framework	Sponsee selection and associated reasons Sponsorship strategies Sponsorship objectives Leveraging activities Measurement activities Dissolution of sponsorships
General Findings and Context	Exchange nature of sponsorship The CCI continuum Emotional experience Impingement factors Sponsor champion Unique aspects Other comments or contrasts with other sponsorship relationships

APPENDIX L: SPONSORSHIP SELECTION - BEGINNINGS AND ASSOCIATED REASONS

Sponsor and Type		<i>Sponsor 1 (O + P/F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 2 (O + F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 3 (I + F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 4 (I + F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 5 (O + F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 6 (O + F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 7 (I + S)</i>	<i>Sponsor 8 (I + F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 9 (I + P)</i>	<i>Sponsor 10 (I + P)</i>
Beginnings of Sponsorship Relationship		Approached by sponsee. Resulted in sponsee receiving sponsor product at no cost.	Internal connection prompted logical link with product.	Became aware of sponsee through employee in business.	Sponsorship of Olympic Team resulted in a desire to support Paralympians as well.	Past client, who is now a coach at the sponsee, convinced the sponsor.	Previous sponsor stepped out.	Needed an ambassador for broader sponsorship relationship.	Approached by manager of sponsee.	Came along by chance - sponsee liked product of sponsor.	Sponsee recommended by an existing sponsee.
Reasons	<i>Someone that knew Someone</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	Yes
	<i>Personal Connection with Specific Sport</i>	Yes	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-
	<i>Understanding of Disabilities</i>	Yes - family involvement.	-	Yes - demonstrate understanding of Olympic movement = able bodied & disabled.	Yes - equal opportunity employer / sponsor.	Yes – has seen the power sport has for PWD.	-	-	Yes - attended Sydney Paralympics but not Olympics.	-	-

	<i>Prominence of Congruence as an Overall, Macro or Micro Dimensional Concept</i>	Greater prominence in reselection - target market, values & goals.	Portfolio & geographical (local attribute).	Values.	Overall & philosophy.	Mission & target market.	Mission & philosophy.	Brand congruence.	Local attributes.	Overall & values.	Image.
	<i>Community Responsibility</i>	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes		
	<i>AWD's / Sponsee inspirational</i>	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
	<i>Low Cost</i>	Yes	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes
	<i>Ambassador</i>	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	NA	NA	Yes	-	Yes	
	<i>Previous and Favourable Impression of Sponsee</i>	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes
Sponsor and Type		<i>Sponsor 1 (O + P/F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 2 (O + F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 3 (I + F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 4 (I + F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 5 (O + F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 6 (O + F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 7 (I + S)</i>	<i>Sponsor 8 (I + F)</i>	<i>Sponsor 9 (I + P)</i>	<i>Sponsor 10 (I + P)</i>